

Hafa Adai!

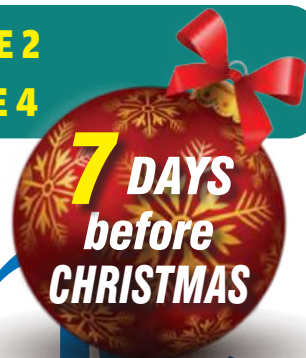
House rejects Senate's version of House bill on legislative appropriation. **PAGE 2**
Court to hear Torres' request to prevent Kingman from prosecuting him. **PAGE 4**

\$1

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Ex-BMV chief sentenced to 5 years



By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Former Department of Public Safety Bureau of Motor Vehicles director Juana C. Leon Guerrero has been sentenced to an imprisonment term of five years for pleading guilty to her involvement in a license fraud scheme.

Last Friday, following a
See EX-BMV on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Former Department of Public Safety Bureau of Motor Vehicles chief Juana Leon Guerrero as she leaves the U.S. District Court for the NMI in this file photo.

Visitor arrivals up 45% in November 2023

» **Arrivals still 60% lower than pre-pandemic levels**

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota grew 45% to 15,800 visitors in November 2023, compared to 10,931 visitors received in November 2022.

However, arrivals are 60%

lower than pre-pandemic levels of November 2019, when arrivals reached 39,717 visitors. In November 2019, 66% of total visitors were from Korea and 24% were from China, the second largest source market at the time. In November 2023, only 2% of all visitors are from China, underscoring the need to further expand The Marianas' source market mix to increase arrival numbers and

See VISITOR on Page 4

KILILI TELLS HOUSE COMMITTEE CHC expected to lose nearly 30 non-US nurses within 6-8 months



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) talks about the Commonwealth Health Center's anticipation of losing nearly 30 non-U.S. nurses in the next six to eight months during the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Workforce markup session last Tuesday.

» **Kilili tells US House committee during markup session**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has informed the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on

See CHC on Page 4

Vocalists top 2023 CNMI's Got Talent



CHRYSTAL MARINO

CNMI Got Talent winner in the adult category Jessel Antonio, second from right, poses with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Bridge Capital LLC CEOs Shawn Scott and John Baldwin during the 13th Annual CNMI'S Got Talent last Saturday at the Kensington Resort in San Roque.

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
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CORRESPONDENT

Vocalists took home the big win in Bridge

Capital LLC's 13th Annual CNMI Got Talent held last Saturday night at the Kensington Hotel in San Roque.

See VOCALISTS on Page 4



CHRYSTAL MARINO

CNMI Got Talent winner in the 16-and-under category Francis Peter, second from right, poses with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Bridge Capital LLC CEOs Shawn Scott and John Baldwin during the 13th Annual CNMI'S Got Talent last Saturday at the Kensington Resort in San Roque.

INSIDE



NATION

Rudy Giuliani has been ordered to pay \$148 million in a defamation case brought by two former Georgia election workers.

PAGE 12



HEALTH & FITNESS

Between economic struggles, political division and life's everyday pressures, the year has already been stressful enough for many people.

PAGE 14



LIFE & STYLE

Matthew Perry died from the acute effects of the anesthetic ketamine, according to the results of an autopsy.

PAGE 15



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Local

House rejects Senate's version of House bill on legislative appropriation

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives rejected on Thursday the Senate version of a House legislation that would require legislative appropriation for all non-locally-sourced funds allocated for the CNMI.

All 17 House members present at a session voted in affirmative to a motion to reject H.B. Number 23-9, House

Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) said with the rejection, he will go ahead and bring this to a conference committee as well.

Villagomez said he will be forming the conference committee at a later time.

A conference committee will hammer out Senate and House differences on the legislation.

Before the voting, Rep. Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan),

who is the principal author of the bill, said they are rejecting the Senate amendments for the mere reason that the reimbursements are not new funds that need to be re-appropriated.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) said essentially what Yangetmai was saying that a lot of these federal funds are used for disasters.

Attao said the government uses general fund monies to address disaster expenditures

therefore it's kind of eating CNMI coffers.

He said when the Federal Emergency Management Agency or any other federal agency remits the money back to the CNMI, the government is just putting it back to the general fund.

Attao said what this Senate amendment does is it's double taxing the general fund.

"So it's saying that we have \$100,000 from the

feds, they're counting it as \$200,000. Well, it's not \$200,000 only 100,000 is taken from the general fund," he said.

Attao said the government is paying back the general fund so

that money makes the general fund back as a whole.

He said then the other portion that the Senate added was

the retroactive provisions.

"We also already know that under the Planning and Budgeting Act, it's only within the fiscal year, there's no beyond fiscal year expenditures, there's no continuing resolution. And in the retroactive portion, we're paying something that's non-existent through the Planning of Budgeting Act," he said.

Definition of 'dangerous weapon' and 'serious bodily injury' amended in new law

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has signed into law a legislation that would amend the Crimes and Criminal Procedure Code definitions of dangerous weapon and serious bodily injury.

Palacios informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and

House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) last week that Senate Bill No. 23-34, Senate Draft 1, is now Public Law No. 23-14.

Authored by Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian), the legislation's purpose is to make expressly clear that the definition of "dangerous weapon"

See **DEFINITION** on Page 4

NWS: Meteor sighting in the Marianas over the weekend



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Photo shows a screen grab from a Facebook post of a purported meteor sighting last Saturday morning over Saipan.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Weather Service confirms that what seemed to be a severe lighting flash last Saturday morning was actually a meteor passing through the Marianas' skies.

Last Saturday, CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management held a press conference to address the "lighting sighting that shook windows" reports that both they and Department of Public Safety received at around 12am last Saturday.

According to HSEM, at around 12:10am on Saturday morning, DPS received a call from a Kagman resident regarding a bright, flashing light from the sky followed by a loud "bang."

The State Warning Point also received a separate call were community members reported that the "bang" shook some windows and doors

"So we connected with the NWS from Guam to get more information about it," said HSEM spokesperson Bernard Villagomez.

According to NWS' Patrick Doll, he said that after reviewing the footage caught by members of the Marianas community, NWS can confirm that the sighting was not lighting but rather a meteor sighting.

"Based on the videos we received, we believe it to be a meteorite. I can confirm it was a definite meteorite," he said.

Dolls said he is unsure when the last meteor sighting in the Marianas happened.

Accepting Entries Now!

What I Wish for Christmas Drawing Contest

OPEN TO KIDS AGES 6 TO 12

Deadline of Submission:
December 19, 2023

Dimensions:
8.5in x 11in to 11in x 17in

Mediums:
Watercolor, Poster Color, Acrylic, Crayons & Color Pencils.
No computer generated artwork allowed.

Draw what you wish for Christmas and tell us why. Add a short description in your drawing as to what is your Christmas wish and why.

Artworks must be original and must be Christmas themed. Winners will get special gifts!

Please submit entries to
Saipan Tribune
JP Center, Beach Road Garapan
M-F at 8am - 6:00pm.
For more information, please email
sales@saipantribune.com
or call (670) 235-2440 and look for Christine.

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Chamber to host 2023 Annual Business Person of the Year Gala

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the Chamber's much-anticipated signature event of the year, the Annual Business Person of the Year Gala, set to take place on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024, at Kensington Hall, Kensington Hotel Saipan.

This memorable event not only marks a celebration of business excellence but also serves as a platform for the installation of the newly elected and returning board of directors. The evening promises a blend of elegance and significance as the Chamber acknowledges outstanding contributions to the local business community.

The gala will feature the presentation of awards, including the 2023 Chamber Member of the Year, 2023 Non-profit of the Year, 2023 Small Business of the Year, and the newly added category,



Triple J Five Star Wholesale and Triple J Truckload Store general manager Jay Santos, 2022 Business Person of the Year, poses with previous winners of the prestigious award during last January's Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2022 "Bowties & Diamonds" Business Person of the Year annual fundraiser gala at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's Hibiscus Hall.

ry, 2023 Sustainable Business of the Year, in collaboration with the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, a proud chamber member. These accolades

recognize businesses and organizations that have demonstrated exceptional dedication, innovation, and community impact throughout the year.

A highlight of the evening will be the much-anticipated announcement of the 2023 Business Person of the Year, a recognition granted to an indi-

vidual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and influence within the business community.

Tickets for this event are

priced at \$150 per person, which includes an open bar for the evening, promising attendees a night of elegance, recognition, networking, and good vibes. For groups, tables can be reserved at \$1,100, accommodating eight guests with a complimentary premium bottle of wine.

To secure your spot at this premier event, please RSVP here or contact us below: <https://business.saipanchamber.com/events/details/2023-annual-business-person-of-the-year-gala-355>

For more information, please call our office at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipanchamber.org.

The Chamber is a dynamic organization dedicated to promoting and enhancing the business environment on Saipan. Through networking, advocacy, and community engagement, the Chamber strives to foster a vibrant and sustainable business community. **(PR)**

MTEC Tourism Summit on Jan. 19 emphasizes 'Green Spaces'

"Green Spaces, Memorable Places/Kâmpun Betdi, Kâmpun Rikuwetdu/Llingil Leyil Walúwal" and eco-tourism will be the emphasis for this year's Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit on Jan. 19, 2024.

The annual summit gathers members of school MY WAVE—Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically—clubs to inspire them with information and activities focused on The Marianas' primary economic driver, tourism. This year's summit will focus on the importance of trees, forests, and other natural green spaces, particularly with the desire of today's traveler for environmental conservation and physical, mental, and spiritual rejuvenation.

"The long-running demand

for natural beauty in tourist destinations is something that our tropical paradise can certainly meet, so it will be great to help our students better understand and appreciate what their islands have to offer," said MTEC board member and Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Guerrero, who is leading the summit preparations.

While the summit has traditionally been held at a hotel, this year the summit committee plans to take participants into nature with a tour of several iconic and scenic tourist sites on Saipan.

"Based on the MVA's exit surveys, the No. 1 activity that visitors want when they choose The Marianas is to enjoy nature," said MTEC secretary and Marianas Vis-



Green spaces like the undisturbed nature of Marpi in Saipan were the highlight of the Hell of The Marianas Century Cycle on Dec. 2, 2023, that attracted cyclists from Korea, Japan, Russia, USA, Guam, and The Marianas.

itors Authority Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "Conservation of green spaces and replanting of trees

are an important consideration of future infrastructure and other development, to keep The Marianas green and at-

tractive for both visitors and residents."

The summit will also feature educational exhibits by

partner organizations and guest speakers.

MTEC's outreach activities this school year are supported by the Hotel Association of the Northern Marianas Islands and the MVA.

For more information on MTEC or starting a school MY WAVE club, contact MVA Community Projects Specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@my-marianas.com or tel. no. (670) 664-3200/1. **(MTEC)**

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NAP to implement modification of benefits based on 2024 reduced federal allocation

The CNMI Nutrition Assistance Program has announced that it will implement a 20% reduction in monthly benefit levels for Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands for the period beginning Jan. 1, 2024, through Sept. 30, 2024. The adjustment in benefit levels during this period corresponds to the reduced federal funding level for FY 2024.

The CNMI NAP also announced that funds will be available to implement a permanent Summer EBT program that will begin Summer 2024. The program is for children receiving free or reduced-price meals in schools over the summer while they

are not in school.

Because of the additional burden that the reduced benefits places on families, the CNMI NAP staff is making its team available to work with families/individuals to maximize their benefits with meal planning budget classes/counseling.

The NAP Program, together with the offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, are also working to ensure benefits continue for families despite the reduced federal funding. Efforts are also underway to explore how benefits can be increased.

For inquiries, contact the Nutrition Assistance Program Office at (670) 237-2800. **(PR)**

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP • 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WWW.CNMIPTS.COM](https://www.cnmiports.com)

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"

Request for Proposals
for: CPA-RFP-001-24
CPA Concession No. CRS-2023-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of two years with an option upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-Concession No. CRS-2023-01 is **December 6, 2023**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on January 9, 2024**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, or cashier's check payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

/s/
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD

P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp • Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPBLB) hereby gives notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 8 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/22/2023)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
 - Upcoming Vacancy on the Board
- VII. Director's Report
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
 - X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Application
 - B. Renewal Application
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
 - Upcoming National Boards Annual Meetings for 2024
 - 2024 FSMB Annual Conference Invitation
 - PsyPact Commission Order
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
 - Five applications for discussions
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

Court to hear Torres' request to prevent Kingman from prosecuting him

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**

kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former governor Ralph DLG Torres' criminal case is moving forward with the Superior Court set to hold multiple hearings in this case starting today. One of the hearings will be pertaining to Torres' previous request for declarator re-

lief preventing assistant attorney general James Kingman from prosecuting his case.

Superior Court Judge Pro Tem Arthur Barcinas is set to hold multiple hearings in the criminal case against Torres which alleges 12 counts of misconduct in public office and one count of theft starting today until

tomorrow afternoon.

On Tuesday, Dec. 19, Barcinas will hear Torres' motion for declarator relief which seeks to prevent Kingman from prosecuting his case because he claims Kingman's contract with the OAG is invalid and unlawful.

Kingman, for his part, argues that Torres' motion for declara-

tory relief should be denied.

According to Torres' motion, the attorney general lacks the authority to appoint and hire a special prosecutor for the misconduct in public office case filed against the former governor relating to first class travel.

Kingman, however, argues Torres' motion was then and

remains improper.

"Since the motion was filed, the Supreme Court has ruled on the 'issue' in a separate challenge to the special prosecutor's admission pro hac vice; the contract at issue was terminated as the special prosecutor and the attorney general moved from a legal services

contract to an employment contract. Because the motion is outside of what may be found in this case and has been mooted by law and events, it should be denied," Kingman said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

VOCALISTS

From page 1

Singers Jessel Antonio, 30, and Francis Peter, 10, won the first-place prizes within their category. The duo also secured a double win as they both nabbed the "Most Christmas" award resulting in them walking away with \$3,000 each.

Antonio's rendition of "O Holy Night" and Peter's mashup medley of "Hallelujah" and "Auld Lang Syne" not only collected the loudest cheers of the evening, but also secured the highest points from the judges in the adult and 16-and-under divisions.

Antonio, who had done exceptionally well in several local contests since her arrival on Saipan, tearfully shared how much the win meant for her.

"I feel so grateful and I will thank God for this opportunity. This prize is for our kids and our family," she said wiping away tears.

Peters shared his gratitude

and said that he only hoped to spread the Christmas spirit and joy.

"I wanted to do it for the people and make them feel the vibe. I tried not to be nervous so I thought of everyone as my family and try to dance and groove to it. I feel so happy, but win or lose it was for fun."

Both extended their gratitude to Bridge Capital.

In the 16-and-under category, second runner-up Juliana Kai Ortiz also won the Governor's Choice Award. First runner-up were cousins Kassidy Manglona and Kassidy Garcia, who also went on to win the Best of Rota award after the duo's cover of "Walking in a Winter Wonderland." There were no contestants for the Best of Tinian.

In the adult 17-and-up category, Heaven Murphy's original composition and infused pop and rap song placed her as first runner-up and acapella group DYNMX placed second runner-up. DYNMX was also presented the Founder's

Choice Award.

While presenting the award to DYNMX, Bridge Capital CEO John Baldwin became emotional.

"They've performed for us when they were in Rhythm & Harmony, they performed for us as solo talents, they've done in groups... so we've known them for a long time. I do get emotional about it because we've watched them grow and now, they're performing together again, when, normally when they graduate from college they don't perform together anymore and so for me it's a magical moment," he said. "With giving them a platform to perform on for many years now and to see them come back together on their own...nobody organized them and they did it because they wanted to be together and I find that very touching."

As for the show that night he remarked, "It never ceases to amaze me the amount of incredible talent that is available in the CNMI. Tonight's show

is the best ever... we've done this 13 times and tonight was absolutely amazing," he said.

Baldwin also commended the organizers of the 13th Annual CNMI Got Talent and continued to welcome performances from Rota and Tinian. "For us this is sort of an answer to a little prayer. We want them to come perform... and then to do such a spectacular job... we want to see more from Rota and Tinian... we want to give them the opportunity."

Bridge Capital vice president Bart Jackson told the media that they had 320 in the room, a number greater than what they had initially expected.

"We had a great event and we had great performers. We had a great crowd I had a great response and interaction between performers and the crowd. One of the judges was telling me how emotional she got when watching certain performances. So, it brings great satisfaction in doing what we do the right way. "

asked that the court be lenient with her daughter as she has shown remorse for her involvement in a license fraud scheme.

Macaranas told the court that he has known Leon Guerrero for years during his time at DPS and attests that she is a good person who made bad choices. He asked that the court be lenient with her sentence.

Lastly, Leon Guerrero gave her allocution stating that she is sorry for dishonoring her family and for what she did under the color of office while she was BMV chief.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

EX-BMV

From page 1

nearly six-hour long sentencing hearing, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Leon Guerrero to a 60-month imprisonment term or about five years.

During last Friday's hearing, the court also imposed a 10-month sentence on Leon Guerrero's co-defendant Li Yongde, also known as "Ike."

In addition, the court ordered that Leon Guerrero be placed under three years' probation upon her release from the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

"Pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, and considering provisions found in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), it is the judgment of the court that the defendant, Leon Guerrero, is hereby sentenced to imprisonment of 60 months followed by a term of 3 years supervised release. Accordingly, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3583, the mandatory conditions are to be imposed immediately," said Manglona.

The judge also imposed a \$15,000 fine on Leon Guerrero.

"Defendant shall pay a fine of \$15,000. Payment in the amount of \$50 a month to begin Jan. 15, 2024. Defendant shall pay a special assessment fee of

\$100 to be paid immediately after sentencing," said Manglona.

However, until Leon Guerrero is placed at one of the facilities under the Federal Bureau of Prisons, she will remain on conditional release.

As part of her release conditions, Leon Guerrero must check in with the U.S. Marshals Service every Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays or she faces another possible charge.

During her sentencing last Friday, the court heard from Leon Guerrero's mother, former Department of Public Safety assistant chief Anthony Macaranas, and Leon Guerrero herself.

Leon Guerrero's mother

touchback provision.

"But we're replacing them [non-U.S. nurses] as we go along with local nurses and new hires. Of course, replacing is not as fast as losing them," Muna said.

Touchback provision refers to the requirement for foreign workers to leave the CNMI before their work visas could be renewed for a third consecutive time. The departure requirement means that these workers will have to stay away from the CNMI until a new permit is approved, which could take months.

Sablan said in his testimony before the Committee on Education and Workforce that making investments in the Marianas workforce as Wagner-Peyser Act program would help ensure that the CNMI has U.S. workers well prepared to meet the needs of businesses and employers.

The delegate said he strongly supports H.R. 6655, also known as A Stronger Workforce for America Act.

Sablan's legislation, H.R. 3193, or the Employment Services and Jobs Parity Act, is included in H.R. 6655.

H.R. 3193 seeks to include

the Marianas and American Samoa in the Federal Employment Service by amending the Wagner-Peyser Act.

He said they have a bipartisan agreement and that now is the time to upgrade America's economic competitiveness by making sure job seekers and employers in the Marianas or throughout the United States get the same high-quality services as other Americans everywhere else in the United States does.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

VISITOR

From page 1

revenue generation.

Visitor arrivals from Korea registered 13,026 visitors in November, 49% higher than November 2022. So far this calendar year, arrivals from Korea have recovered 75% compared to pre-pandemic. Jeju Air and T'way operate a total of 21 regular flights each week to Saipan. With the end of summer and beginning of low travel season, four weekly seasonal flights from Busan by Jeju Air ended in late October and Asiana Airlines also suspended its four weekly flights from Seoul until mid-December. Asiana Airlines will resume service on Dec. 20 with two weekly flights using A330 aircraft during the winter season, adding 110 seats per flight—a 38% increase—compared to the A320 aircraft previously in operation.

The strong U.S. Dollar and weaker Korean Won and Japanese Yen are also influencing travelers from those countries to choose non-U.S. destinations at this time.

The Marianas received 544 visitors from Japan in November 2023 compared to 455 visitors in November 2022. Over-

all, the number of outbound Japanese travelers is about 45% lower than pre-pandemic levels. Higher fuel surcharges are driving up flight costs. and with limited flights to The Marianas at this time, Japanese travelers are also having to pay for three nights while staying only two days. To directly counter the unfavorable currency exchange rate, the MVA's ongoing "Marianacation Tabitoku"—or Travel Deal—promotion aims to entice visitors with special offers from United Airlines, local hotels, and MVA member businesses, including the chance to win \$1,000 and other prizes in a raffle.

China arrivals in November 2023 reached 243 compared to 28 arrivals in November 2022. Prior to the pandemic, China was the second largest source market of visitors to The Marianas with numerous direct flights a week. Most visitors from China are now FITs transiting via Seoul and Tokyo to The Marianas, resulting in a drop in arrivals in November due to the suspension of flights by Asiana in late October.

In November, The Marianas also received 845 visitors from Guam, 801 visitors from the United States, and a combined 341 visitors from all other markets. (MVA)

DEFINITION

From page 2

includes anything used by a person to inflict serious bodily injury on another person.

King-Nabors stated in the bill that recent cases have shown some confusion in court with the application of the definition of a dangerous weapon to assault and battery cases.

The senator cited a particular case in which an attack by an inmate in prison with a handmade weapon was dismissed despite the danger of serious injury through the use of a shank.

He said cases in which a criminal defendant, especially an inmate, uses some sort of weapon present the greatest danger to the public and victims.

King-Nabors' bill clarifies the definition, simplifies the level of threatened or actual injury and emphasizes to the courts in the application of law that anything may be treated as a dangerous weapon

through the manner of its use or intended use, regardless whether there was an actual loss of life or substantial risk of death.

Under the bill, "dangerous weapon" means any automatic weapon, dangerous device, firearm, gun, handgun, long gun, semiautomatic weapon, knife, machete, spear gun, and shank.

It means anything manifestly designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious injury.

It also means anything that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, regardless whether death or serious bodily injury actually occurred.

The legislation also defines "serious bodily injury" as it creates risk of death or causes death; causes permanent disfigurement; and causes a permanent protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

CHC

From page 1

Education and the Workforce during a "markup" session last Tuesday that the CNMI's only hospital, Commonwealth Health Center, anticipates losing nearly 30 non-U.S. nurses over the next six to eight months.

Asked about Sablan's statements, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muna said yesterday that losing non-U.S. nurses is due to the

House votes to reject Supreme Court’s proposed Rules of Criminal Procedure

The House of Representatives voted to reject the Supreme Court’s proposed changes to the Rules of Criminal Procedure last Dec. 14. Members adopted the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, chaired by Rep. Marissa Flores (Ind-Saipan).



Flores

Under the CNMI Constitution, the Judiciary may propose rules of criminal procedure in which the Legislature has 60 days to review and vote on. A vote of disapproval by either the House or the Senate results in rejection of the proposed rules. Last Nov. 28, the JGO Committee held a public hearing on the proposed rules. Although the Supreme Court was invited to attend, Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro notified the committee in writing that the Judiciary was declining to appear and explain the proposed rules. The committee did receive a written comment from

Attorney General Edward Manibusan, advising the committee to reject the proposed rules and explaining problems with the changes. In addition, chief solicitor Robby Glass appeared before the committee and answered numerous questions by members, explaining numerous problems with the proposed rule changes. The committee voted unanimously to recommend rejection of the proposed rules and issued a written report explaining its reasons. A copy of that report is attached. “The proposed changes to the Criminal Procedure Rules would have caused the immediate release of newly arrested defendants without supervision and more delays in the processing of criminal cases through the introduction of frivolous attacks on the discovery process,” said Flores. “These proposed rule changes move in the wrong direction,” said Flores. “The

time has come for the Judiciary to look at better ways to hold themselves accountable. Delays in the trial of important criminal cases, especially those cases involving allegations of corruption by public officials, have damaged our confidence in the judicial system. Wholesale recusals by all of the judges, resulting in the appointment of Guam judges, especially without any explanation, makes everyone question the independence of the Judiciary. “I would like to see new rules that set deadlines for holding a trial. How about a speedy trial right for the Commonwealth?” asked Flores. “How about requiring judges to explain why they can’t hear a case and need to hire an outside judge without all of the attendant delays?” The House did vote to approve proposed changes to the traffic court rules. The Senate has not yet set the Traffic or Criminal Procedure Rules for a hearing. (PR)

Lawmaker urges consumers to report labeling violations in stores

Recently, there have been reports brought to Rep. Julie A. Ogo (Ind-Rota), chairwoman of the 23rd Northern Marianas House of Representative Standing Committee on Commerce & Tourism, concerning food products and other commodities stocked in stores that were not labeled in English, Chamorro, or Carolinian as required by law. Under 16 C.F.R. Part 500, pursuant to Section 4 of the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, requires that all products are “labeled to disclose net contents, identity of commodity, and name and place of business of the product’s manufacturer, packer, or distributor.” Additionally, pursuant to CNMI Public Law 11-40, Public Law 12-48, and subsequent adoption of the regulations under 3 CMC §§ 21CN23 (2) & (3) and 3 CMC § 2786., all imported food and products shall be labeled in English, Chamorro, or Carolinian.

“This is dangerous, because we have no understanding what the food and products are, the ingredients, and who manufactured and packaged them and this is the same for repackaged foods displayed on the cash out counters that were taken out of their original packages,” said Ogo. In her letter to the directors of the Customs Division and Public Health requesting for a copy of their collaboration protocol, she encourages both agencies, to be vigilant in enforcing the laws and regulations so the objectives of any law and regulation of ultimately protecting the people against harm is being met. “Notwithstanding our current financial situation, this applies to all the departments or divisions tasked with the administration and enforcement. If they are facing any challenges and limitations, they should bring these matters to the legislature’s attention so we can help them achieve their goals


and objectives by strengthening the laws,” she added. “Given our financial challenges, we need to step up on enforcement to include making sure that businesses are not under reporting their income by not recording their sales properly by generating receipts, auditing and regular inspections are a must,” said Ogo. Ogo is encouraging all CNMI consumers to adopt the same vigilant approach to resolving problems by reporting things they know are illegal or in violation of laws and regulations. Please report any product labeling violations to Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health on Saipan at (670) 236-2022, on Tinian at (670) 433-9233/63 (THC), and on Rota at (670) 532-9461 (RHC), Office of the Attorney General at (670) 237-7500 or contact her office at (670) 664-8888 and speak with her staff or email mariananass@gmail.com. (PR)

Saipan exchange students visit Tokyo for fulfilling experience


Students under the Saipan Mayor’s Office International Exchange Program had a fulfilling experience during their one week stay in Tokyo, Japan. The students participated in a wide variety of activities that allowed them to experience and appreciate the Japanese culture and life. The children stayed with Japanese host families to help them get accustomed to daily life.

The students visited Tomihisa School where they visited classes and toured the school’s amenities such as the library and gym. They also got to interact and spend time with Japanese students. The children also went on sightseeing tours around Tokyo, visiting locations such as Harajuku, Shibuya as well as areas of cultural and historical significance such as Asakusa

and the Akasaka Palace. In addition to the cultural and educational emphasis of the trip, the students also took part in recreational activities such as visiting Ueno Zoo and Disneyland. The International Exchange Program aims to provide an opportunity for cultural and educational exchange and building good relations with our neighbors. (PR)



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS
P.O. Box 500830, Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No. (670) 234-3751/52/53 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Facebook: facebook.com/DPLCNMI



NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

- i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 013 E 03, containing an area of approximately 10,630 square meters, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A map showing the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.
- ii. The prospective Lessee is The Pacific Line Corporation. The list of officers for The Pacific Line Corporation: Lee, Cun Ki, as President/ Treasurer and Eric Cruz, as Vice President and Jooyoon Delos Reyes, as Secretary.
- iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of The Pacific Line Corporation, mainly by Eric Cruz and Jooyoon Delos Reyes.
- iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a recycling center.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term of the lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

- v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp
- vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.
- vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before January 1, 2024, at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TĀNU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lain Pupbluku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku mannānā'i nutisia guini put i intension-riha para u ma'atkila metton na tanu' pupbluku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Mariānas. Maseha hāyi na pattidā intirisao gi halum hinirāt pupbluku siha muna'hālum upiñon, infotmasion, pat testimonium kinontra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para i atkilon nu i tanu' pupbluku. Kumu mapribeni mās mo'na ginin i Lain Pupbluku 15-2, i tinattiyi pettanesi na infotmasion manisisa para u mapupblika.

- i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbluku madiskribi kumu Lot 013 E 03, ni kunsissiti kási 10,630 square meters, ni gaigi gi hālum Lower Base, Saipan. I māpa ni a'annuk i pāttin i lugāt managuaha gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku para inspeksion.
- ii. I prospective lessee sa I Pacific Line Corporation. I listan nu ufisiāt siha para I Pacific Line Corporation: si Lee, Cun Ki, komu Presidenti/Tresureru yan si Eric Cruz, komu Sigundu Presidenti yan si Jooyoon Delos Reyes, komu Sekritāriu.
- iii. I maproponi na atkilon ha tattiyi i regulasion DPL siha yan ginen manegosiu ni ufisiāt yan direktor-riha I Pacific Line Corporation, mayotmenti ginen as Eric Cruz yan si Jooyoon Delos Reyes.
- iv. I lessee debi na u usa i lugāt put atyu ha' na rason nu i recycling center.

I tema nu i maproponi na kuntrātan atkilon sa' bentisingku (25) āñus na tiempu.

I maproponi na atkilon gi kada' sākkan gi durāntin teman kontrātan i atkilon mapega gi put sientus nu i bālin "appraised fair market" i propiedāt yan i aplikāo na put sientus nu i "Business Gross Receipts" gi halum i regulasion DPL.

- v. I kopian nu i maproponi na kuntrātan atkilon siha machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku ni gaigi gi sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan i Joeten Dandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, primet (1st) na bibiendan i De'Ana Commercial Building, iya Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet (1st) na bibiendan i PM Building, giya Tini'an. I kopia debi lokkui' na managuaha online gi www.dpl.gov.mp
- vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku tāya marisibi ni hāfa na tinahguin inofresi siha ni para u ma'atkila i suhetu na tanu' pupbluku gi Lower Base, Saipan.
- vii. I Sekritāriu Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku debi na u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, infotmasion, testimonium kinontra pat tinahguin prinoponi siha ginin i manintirisao na pattida siha gi pat āntis di Ineru 1, 2024, gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbluku siha ni gaigi giya Sa'ipan, Luta pat Tini'an.

ARONGORONGOL PPWOMMWOL ATKILÓONOL FALÚW

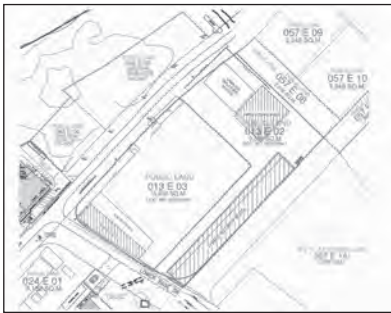

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) reel Alléghul Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re isiisiwow arongorong igha re mǎngemángil rebwe atkilaay faluweer toulap Ilól Seipél, Commonwealth Teél Falúw kka Efang Ilól Marianas. Schóo kka re tipáli sángi toulap emmwel rebwe isiisilong ischil kkapas, data, views, ngare angilingil ppwomm ikka aa siiwel ngáli ppwommwol atkiloónol faluweer toulap. Re bwal ayoorā sángi Alléghul Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e ffil ebwe akkatéewow e amwirimwiriti:

- i. Ppwommwol atkiloónol faluweer toulap e bwáa bwe Lot 013 E 03, e lo 10,630 reel square meters, iye e lo Lower Base, Seipél. E bwáóló wóól móopal falúw eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap reel ubwe amwuri.
- ii. Ppwommwol schóól atkiloón nge Pacific Line Corporation. List-al officers ngáli Pacific Line Corporation: Lee, Cun Ki, bwe president/Treasurer me Eric Cruz, bwe Vice President me Jooyoon Delos Reyes, bwe Sekkretóoriya.
- iii. Ppwommwol atkiloón e angúúngul fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sángi officers me director-il Pacific Line Corporation, spesiatmente Eric Cruz me Jooyoon Delos Reyes.
- iv. Rebwe yááli ppwommwol atkiloón ngáli liliyál recycling.

Ppwommwol abwungunwungúl atkiloón nge ruweigh me limoow ráagh.

Ppwommwol atkiloón ghal ráagh atol abwungubwungúl atkiloón yeel nge e lo reel percentage-il appraised fair market value reel falúw fengál me application percentage reel Gross Receipts Ilól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

- v. Pappidil ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkiloón nge emmwel ubwe bweibwogh me reel Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap, iye e lo 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor reel De'Ana Commercial Building, Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta; ngare 1st floor me PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwal yoor pappid emmwel ubwe amwuri online me www.dpl.gov.mp
- vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh siiwelil ppwomm reel atkiloónol faluweer toulap iye e lo Alal Ghaloowa, Seipél.
- vii. Sekkretóoriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re bweibwogh ischil kkapas, views, angilingi ngare siiwelil ppwommw sángi schóo kka re mwuschel wóól ngare mmwalil Eneero1, 2024, me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap iye e lo Seipél, Luuta ngare Tchiliyól.



CHCC's new equipment enhances endoscopy services



CHCC

A Stryker representative demonstrates the 1688 Advanced Imaging Modalities.

In alignment with its mission and vision, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is pleased to announce a significant leap forward in its commitment to providing innovative services with the acquisition of Stryker's 1688 Advanced Imaging Modalities (AIM) 4K Platform. This addition is set to advance endoscopy services and enhance minimally invasive procedures performed at the CHCC operation rooms.

The 1688 AIM 4K Platform is a minimally invasive surgical tower that will now provide CHCC surgeons with

superior visualization and advanced imaging modalities across an array of specialties.

The new all-in-one system features:

■ **4K Image Resolution:** Brilliant 4K resolution offers our surgeons crystal-clear images for improved visualization during surgery.

■ **L-11 Light Source and Auto-light Technology:** The proprietary auto-light technology automatically adjusts based on anatomy to provide consistent lighting, enabling our surgeons to focus on the procedure at hand and nothing else.

■ **Advanced Imaging Mo-**

dalities: Three distinct SPY fluorescence imaging modalities; Contrast, Overlay and ENV are integrated into the platform and enable real-time 4K fluorescence images of perfusion and critical anatomy. Studies have shown that the use of fluorescence imaging may assist surgeons in making better clinical decisions during colorectal, laparoscopic cholecystectomy and other minimally invasive procedures.

■ **SPY-PHI:** The 1688 AIM 4K Platform also supports SPY-PHI, a portable fluorescence imaging device that enables perfusion assessment in vessels and related tissue perfusion during plastic, microsurgical, reconstructive and gastrointestinal procedures. The ability to visualize blood flow during open surgery may also help our surgeons make critical decisions that can reduce the risk of complications related to poorly perfused tissue.

"The 1688 AIM 4K Platform significantly enhances CHCC's endoscopy services,

enabling our medical team to diagnose and treat a wide range of medical conditions with greater precision," said Dr. Brian Citro, general surgeon. "Patients can expect more accurate diagnoses, minimally invasive procedures, and quicker recovery times," he added.

The addition of this equipment to the CHCC facility highlights CHCC's dedica-

tion in providing accessible, high-quality, patient-centered wellness outcomes for all people in the CNMI.

"I want to thank everyone involved in making this investment a reality and this investment is just one example of our commitment to providing the best healthcare experience for our patients," said CEO Esther L. Muña. "The CHCC remains committed in

investing for the health of our community and continuing to explore opportunities to improve and innovate."

"We are excited to provide our patients with advanced care through our investing in this state-of-the-art technology by Stryker."

This project was funded through the Department of Interior Technical Assistance Program. (CHCC)



CHCC

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. OR team poses for a group photo.

PROPERTY SALE NOTICE

of the remaining leasehold interests in a
Chalan Laulau view lot legally described:

**Lot EA 683, an area of 13,003 sq. meters,
55 yr lease was executed 5-15-22
ending 5-14-2077**

This sale is December 29, 2023 via zoom at 1pm CST.
Seller has the right to refuse any offer. Additional
information is available by emailing
saipanhomes@gmail.com Saipan Services Inc.,
for all CNMI property needs. 670-287-4766

NMC campuses closed Dec. 18-Jan. 2

Northern Marianas College campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will be closed (with few exceptions) from Dec. 18, 2023 to Jan. 2, 2024. Offices will reopen on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024.

Spring 2024 registration

Ongoing (current) NMC students who have earned 13 or more credits can continue to register for classes without academic advising by accessing their ProaPortal accounts.

Registration for Spring 2024 classes through ProaPortal will continue through Jan. 19, 2024. Students will be able to make changes to their schedule during "add and drop" week on Jan. 16-20, 2024, but course selection may be limited during this period. More information about NMC's Spring 2024 semester can be found at www.marianas.edu.

Finance office

Note that NMC's Financial Services Department will be

open to support grant-funded programs, reports, construction activities, and other financial obligations. If additional assistance is needed, email david.attao@marianas.edu.

CNMI Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The CNMI SBDC Office will remain open to the public with normal business hours (closed weekends and holidays) from 8am to 5pm from

Monday to Friday.

General inquiries and assistance

For urgent matters, community members are asked to email nmc@marianas.edu. For matters related to NMC CREES, email crees@marianas.edu for assistance. For campus emergencies, contact NMC security at (670) 237-6800. (NMC)

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

5.0-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 1:24pm on Dec. 17, 2023, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands Region, NMI. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

5.0-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 8:17pm on Dec. 16, 2023, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands Region, NMI. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

4.8-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 8:15pm on Dec. 16, 2023, a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands Region, NMI. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or adviso-

ries that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

5.8-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 7:50pm on Dec. 16, 2023, a 5.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands Region, NMI. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

5.3-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 5:45am on Dec. 15, 2023, a 5.3-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands Region, NMI. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)



REGULAR BOARD MEETING NOTICE

P.O. BOX 500861 CK
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-3200/1
FAX: (670) 664-3237

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the MVA Conference Room.**

MEETING AGENDA

1) Preliminary Matters

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes
 - November 20, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

2) Public Comments

3) Committee Reports

- Finance Committee
 - Fund Status

4) Old Business

- MVA-RFP-23-2304: Marianas Visitors Authority

Representation, Promotional and Public Relations Services for JAPAN MARKET Status Update

5) New Business

- Joint Promotions- Hong Kong
- MVA Office Building Fund Option

6) Executive Session

7) Miscellaneous/Announcements

- Other
- Next Regular Board Meeting

8) Adjournment

/s/Gloria Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@plicom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2024

Opening date: November 24, 2023 Closing date: December 22, 2023

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) Saipan Airport Manager
(1) Comptroller

SALARY

\$70,000 (UNGRADED)
\$80,000 (UNGRADED)

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (1) Rota Ports Manager

SALARY

\$55,000 (UNGRADED)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00P.M. on Friday, December 22, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hspcialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

UOG breaks ground for School of Engineering building



UOG
Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, 11th from left, and Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, 10th from left, lead the ceremonial shoveling of sand at the groundbreaking for the School of Engineering building on campus last Friday, Dec. 15.

The University of Guam broke ground last Friday, Dec. 15, for the construction of its first School of Engineering Building at a time of growth in enrollment among aspiring engineers and as the island sees a construction boom.

It took multifaceted efforts to get the \$7.9-million, 16,500-foot construction project off the ground following construction delays attributed to complex financing arrangements as construction costs throughout the island escalated in the past several years.

President Anita Borja Enriquez thanked many parties who worked together in advancing the project. The UOG Endowment Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development worked out a financing mechanism to help the project get the funding it needs to meet the higher construction cost.

Enriquez also thanked Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero for providing a \$7-million funding package to support the School of Engineering construction project as well as the Student Success Center Building project.

“It really took a community effort to make all of these come to fruition,” Enriquez said.

Within the past few weeks,

UOG has held groundbreaking ceremonies for three construction projects, one for the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health’s Nursing Annex. The second to break ground the same day the Nursing Annex project broke ground is for the Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Pacific facility.

“Working in concert with the University of Guam Endowment Foundation, we are blessed now to have the third out of four projects that we have been anticipating,” President Enriquez said. The Student Success Center will be the fourth project to break ground soon.

Leon Guerrero attended the ceremony and congratulated the University for the milestone.

“It has raised the stature of our university and that’s the initiative that I know President Enriquez is coming forward with,” said Gov. Leon Guerrero. She added that UOG is raising the level of higher education not just for Guam but also for the island nations in the Western Pacific.

UOG School of Engineering growth jibes with Guam construction boom

The growth of the School of Engineering, which now has more than 170 students, is oc-

curing as the island is seeing a construction boom.

“You can see all the civilian projects, you can see all the new projects, as our economy is flourishing,” the governor said, in part.

RIM Architects designed the School of Engineering.

The construction contractor, Future World Corp., aims to complete the project on time, said its President Richard Chi. The project’s estimated completion date is March 2025.

The UOG Board of Regents approved a four-year Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering for the School of Engineering in February 2019.

Fast facts:

UOG’s School of Engineering:

■ produced 28 Civil Engineering Graduates since 2022

■ welcomed 170 declared civil engineering majors in Academic Year 2022-2023

UOG established partners in workforce development and career pathways for UOG Engineering students and graduates with:

■ Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Marianas

■ University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard

■ Cabras Marine Corp. (UOG)

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Powerful quake shakes Vanuatu; no tsunami threat

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—A powerful earthquake shook the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu on Thursday evening, but countries in the region said there was no threat of a tsunami. The magnitude 7.1 earthquake was located 123 kilometers (76 miles) south of the town of Isangel on the island of Tanna, the U.S. Geological Agency said. It said the quake was centered at a depth of 48 kilometers (30 miles). The chance of fatalities and large economic losses in the sparsely populated area was low, it said.

Vanuatu has a population of about 337,000, with about 1,200 living in Isangel. The area is part of the “Ring of Fire,” an arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world’s earthquakes occur. A 7.7 magnitude earthquake in May created small tsunami waves in Vanuatu.

Magnitude 5.1 quake felt widely across Big Island of Hawaii; no damage or risk of tsunami

HILO, Hawaii (AP)—A magnitude 5.1 earthquake on the Big Island of Hawaii was felt widely Monday, but there were no re-

ports of damage or injury, officials said. The earthquake hit at 5:54 p.m. near the Kilauea volcano at a depth of 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) below sea level, according to a statement from the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. The initial quake and a magnitude 3.0 aftershock were not related to volcanic activity, the statement said. “Aftershocks will likely continue, some large enough to be felt locally. We see no detectable changes in activity at Kilauea as a result of these earthquakes,” the observatory said. There was no risk of a tsunami, officials said. Hundreds of people across much of the island reported shaking.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS

P.O. Box 500830, Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No (670) 234-3751/52/52 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Facebook: [facebook.com/DPLCNMI](https://www.facebook.com/DPLCNMI)



NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested party(ies) of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the proposed lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published:

- The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 047 H 04, containing an area of approximately 1,383 square meters, situated in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan. A map showing the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands office located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, for inspection.
- The prospective Lessee is Shining Star Inc. The list of officers for Shining Star Inc.: Mr. Ju, Weimin, as President, Mr. Zhao, Liang, as Vice President and Mr. Deng, Aihua as Secretary/Treasurer.
- The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by Shining Star, Inc’s authorized local representative, Mr. Ralph Demapan.
- The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a parking for the hotel establishment.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term of the lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPLs regulation.

- A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the Department of Public Lands Offices:

- 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan;
- 1st floor of the De’Ana Commercial Building, in Songsong Village, Rota; and
- 1st floor of the PM Building, Tinian.

A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

- The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land property in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan.
- The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before January 1, 2024, at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TĀNU’ PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tanu’ Pupbliku mannānā’i nutisia guini put i intension-niha para u ma’atklila metton na tanu’ pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Mariānas. Maseha hāyi na pattidā intirisao gi halum hinirāt pupbliku siña muna’hālum upiñon, infotmasion, pat testimoniun kinontra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para i atklion nu i tanu’ pupbliku. Kumu mapribeni mās mo’na ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattitiyi pettanesi na infotmasion manisista para u mapupblika.

- I maproponi na atklion tanu’ pupbliku madiskribi kumu Lot 047 H 04, ni kunsissisti kási 1,383 square meters, ni gaigi gi hālum Chalan Kanoa, Saipan. I māpa ni a’annuk i pāttin i lugāt managuaha gi ufisanan Dipattamen tun Tanu’ Pupbliku ni gaigi gi sigundu na bibiendā gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building gi halum Dandan, para inspeksion.
- I prospective lessee sa i Shining Star, Inc. I listan nu ufisiāt siha para i Shining Star, Inc: si Siñot Ju, Weimin, komu Presidenti, si Siñot Zhao, Liang, komu Sigundu Presidenti, yan si Siñot Deng, Aihua komu Sekritāri u/Tresureru.
- I maproponi na atklion ha tattiyi i regulasion DPL siha yan ginen manegosiu ni as Shining Star, Inc’s ma’aturisa na deligādun tāotāo tānu’, as Siñot Ralph Demapan.
- I lessee debi na u usa i lugāt put atyu ha’ na rason nu i parking lot ni chechu yan i fondasion hotel-niha.

I tema nu i maproponi na kontrātan atklion sa’ bentsingku (25) ānus na tiempu.

I maproponi na atklion gi kada’ sākkan gi durāntin teman kontrātan i’ atklion mapega gi put sientus nu i bālin “appraised fair market” i propiedāt yan i aplikān na put sientus nu i “Business Gross Receipts” gi halum i regulasion DPL.

- I kopian nu i maproponi na kuntrātan atklion siña machuli’ gi ufisanan i Dipattamentun Tanu’ Pupbliku siha:

- Sigundu na bibiendan i Joeten Dandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan;
- Primet (1st) na bibiendan i De’Ana Commercial Building, iya Songsong Village, Luta; yan
- Primet (1st) na bibiendan i PM Building, giya Tini’an.

I kopia debi lokku’ na managuaha online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

- I Dipattamentun Tanu’ Pupbliku tāya marisibi ni hāfa na tinahguin inofresi siha ni para u ma’atklila i suhetu na tanu’ pupbliku gi Chalan Kanoa, Saipan.
- I Sekritāriun Dipattamentun Tanu’ Pupbliku debi na u aksepta tini’gi upiñon, infotmasion, testimoniun kinontra pat tinahguin prinoponi siha ginin i manitrisaona pattida siha gi pat āntis di Ineru 1, 2024, gi ufisanan Dipattamentun Tanu’ Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Sa’ipan, Luta pat Tini’an.

ARONGORONGOL PPWOMMWOL ATKILÓONOL FALÚW

Sāngi Tālil 106 (b) reel Allēghūl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re isiisiwow arongorong igha re māngemāngil rebwe atklilaay faluweer toulap llol Seipēl, Commonwealth Tēel Falūw kka Efāng llol Marianas. Schóo kka re tipālī sāngi toulap emmwel rebwe isiisilong ischil kkapas, data, views, ngare angingil ppwomm ikka aa siwel ngālī ppwommwol atklilóonol faluweer toulap. Re bwal ayora sāngi Allēghūl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e ffil ebwe akkatēewow e amwirimiriwitiw:

- Ppwommwol atklilóonol faluweer toulap e bwāā bwe Lot 047 H 04, e lo 1,383 reel square meters, iye e lo Alal Ghaloowa, Seipēl. E bwāālo wóol móopal falūw eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap wóol 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, reel ubwe amwuri.
- Ppwommwol schóol atklilóon nge Shining Star Inc. List-al officers ngālī Shining Star Inc.: Mr. Ju, Weimin, bwe president, Mr. Zhao, Liang, bwe Vice President me Mr. Deng, Aihua bwe Sekkretóoriyo/Treasurer.
- Ppwommwol atklilóon e angúungú fengāl me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sāngi Shining Star, Inc’s local representative iye e yoor bwāngil nge Mr. Ralph Demapan.
- Schóol atklilóon ebwe yāáyā falūw ngālī liliyāl parking lot ngālī hotel.

Ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atklilóon nge fáaigh ráagh.

Ppwommwol atklilóon ghal ráagh atol abwungubwungúl atklilóon yeel nge e lo reel percentage of the appraised fair market value reel falūw fengāl me application percentage of Gross Receipts llol mwóghutughutúl DPL.

- Pappidil ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atklilóon nge emmwel ubwe bweibwogh me reel Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me:

- 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, Seipēl;
- 1st floor me De’Ana Commercial Building, me Apilómwol Songsong, Luta; me
- 1st floor me PM Building, Tchilyól.

Ebwal yoor pappidil emmwel ubwe amwuri online me www.dpl.gov.mp

- Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh siiwelil ppwommw reel atklilóonol faluweer toulap iye e lo Alal Ghaloowa, Seipēl.
- Sekkretóoriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re bweibwogh ischil kkapas, views, angingil ngare siiwelil ppwommw sāngi schóo kka re mwuschel wóol ngare mmwalil Enero 1, 2024, me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap iye e lo Seipēl, Luuta ngare Tchilyól.



Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

US should join the world's nations in urging a Gaza cease-fire

Israel had broad support from the nations of the world after Hamas' murderous Oct. 7 attack, its premeditated slaughter of innocent people and its unconscionable taking of civilian hostages. Accounts of sexual assault and horrors even more unspeakable help to explain the ferocity of the Israeli counterattack.

As President Joe Biden has noted, though, Israel is now losing sympathy and global support due to its "indiscriminate bombing" and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of any prospect of a future Palestinian state.

Hamas atrocities, no matter how evil, do not justify Israel's casual conflation of legitimate militant targets and Palestinian civilians.

From the beginning of Israel's response, governments and observers urged an end to the disproportionate civilian killings and warned of starvation and rampant spread of disease in the tiny, densely populated strip of land. They called then, and are properly calling now, for a cease-fire.

Early on, Netanyahu said there would be no let-up.

"Just as the United States would not agree to a cease-fire after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the terrorist attack of 9/11," he said on Oct. 30, "Israel will not agree to the cessation of hostilities with Hamas after the horrific attack of Oct. 7."

Yet less than a month later, Israel agreed to a cease-fire—of sorts.

The pause in military action that began Nov. 24 was set for four days, but talks mediated by Qatar resulted in two extensions. Hamas returned about 100 hostages and Israel released around 240 jailed Palestinians. Gaza civilians were given a respite for mourning their loved ones killed in the bombings and a chance to obtain water, food and medical supplies.

Hostilities resumed on Nov. 30. Since then, Israel's bombing of Gaza has been—difficult as it is to fathom—even more brutal. Having warned Palestinian civilians to leave their homes in north Gaza, and then essentially destroying Gaza City, the Israeli military is now bringing the same destruction to the southern part of the strip. Several aid groups described the humanitarian situation in the territory as in "apocalyptic free fall."

Horrified by the slaughter, most of the nations of the world have called for another, more-lasting cease-fire. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to that effect Tuesday, days after a Security Council vote was thwarted by a U.S. veto.

It's important to remember that from the time Hamas won Gaza elections in 2006, it and Israel have been at war, punctuated by periodic truce, pause or cease-fire (the terminology matters little to civilians trying to live their lives and raise their children).

Full-scale fighting erupted in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021, then in each case largely abated. Each pause of a year, two years, seven years, brought not only periods relatively free

See US on Page 9



Reality check—intifada has nothing to do with genocide of Jews

When New York Rep. Elise Stefanik repeatedly — and now infamously — badgered three college presidents about the nuances of free speech last week, she attempted to push her narrative that elite schools are antisemitic by equating “chants for intifada” with “genocide of Jews.”

The three presidents fell for the trap that a Palestinian uprising could be connected to crimes against humanity.

I was a journalist for Al Fajr, a Palestinian weekly, in the late 1980s, when the first intifada began. The word appeared on leaflets in the title of a Palestinian Liberation Organization-backed group: the Underground Unified National Leadership of the Intifada.

Dan Fisher, then the Jerusalem bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times, asked me to translate it. “Intifada” means “shaking off,” I told him, a reference to the demand for freedom from occupation. Palestinians opposed the occupation, not Israel. Palestinians’ aspirations were for an independent state alongside Israel, not instead of Israel.

Initially, the intifada included the methods of resistance practiced by Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. My cousin Mubarak Awad was deported by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir for crisscrossing the occupied Palestinian territories and distributing the Arabic translation of Harvard professor Gene Sharp’s writings on nonviolence. Mubarak advocated boycotts of Israeli products, work refusals and building up the Palestinian economy to prepare for independence.

To equate the call for an end to the Israeli occupation with a call for the genocide of Jews is a bizarre reversal that turns victims into aggressors.

Six years of civil disobedience and protest brought about the Oslo Accords and the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO on Sept. 13, 1993. On the eve of that important agreement, the PLO recognized Israel and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, that important event, sealed with a White House handshake between PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was upended when a radical

By **DAOUD KUTTAB**

Los Angeles Times

Daoud Kuttab is a Palestinian journalist, a former professor of journalism at Princeton University and a columnist with Al-Monitor. X: @daoudkuttab Threads: @Daoud.Kuttab



Israeli settler named Yigal Amir assassinated Rabin in 1995 as he was departing from a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

The courageous Rabin was succeeded by Benjamin Netanyahu in his first term as Israeli prime minister. Then as now, Netanyahu multiplied illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since Oslo, the number of Israeli settlers has quadrupled in the West Bank, the very territory that was supposed to be an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

As part of the Oslo Accords, Israel agreed to open a safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank. That passageway was opened in 1999 but lasted one year and has been closed since.

In the winter of 2000, Israeli prime minister candidate Ariel Sharon staged a deliberately provocative campaign visit to Al Aqsa Mosque. The Palestinian protests that followed were violently and fatally put down, and so began the second intifada, a recognition that negotiation and nonviolence had failed to end the occupation and create an independent Palestinian state.

Dan Fisher in 1988 was one of the first to make “intifada” a household word in America and the English-speaking world. The term has never meant genocide, and its target is not Jews but Israel’s illegal occupation—“the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by war,” as U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, adopted in 1967, puts it.

In response to Stefanik’s congressional bluster, the three presidents of the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and MIT should have stated clearly that genocide against Jews or any other people is unacceptable. They could have added that intifada is in no way equivalent to that heinous act.

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House Republicans can’t govern, but they try, try again to impeach Biden

House Republicans plan to flee the Capitol this week for the holidays after almost 12 months in power. And flee they should: If they had any shame, they would be feeling plenty of it after the year they’ve had. They’ve done nothing when it comes to the two issues that helped them win a slim majority in the 2022 midterm elections: crime and inflation. What they have done is prevent Congress from funding the government for the full fiscal year that began Oct. 1. They threatened a default on the U.S. debt in the spring and two government shutdowns in the fall. Now they’re threatening Ukraine’s very existence by blocking U.S. aid, a stalemate that brought President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Washington, hat in hand, for some futile diplomacy. Amid these failures, the House Republicans have made U.S. history. They took four days and 15 ballots to elect a speaker in January, then ousted that “leader”—a House first—in October, and fought for weeks, paralyzing Congress before finally electing a new speaker. And what have they chosen for a final act, the capstone on what is shaping up as one of the least productive Congresses in memory? Perhaps something to better the lives of their constituents? Heavens, no. The Republicans voted to begin an impeachment inquiry aimed at President Biden, with the requisite “high Crimes and Misdemeanors” still to be determined. Trying to fill in the blanks will give them plenty to do in 2024, never mind the actual business of governing. House members come and go, but the Biden impeachment effort is brought to you by much the same gang that already made punchlines of a string of so-called Democratic scandals—think Benghazi, Solyndra, Fast and Furious. I won’t bother recalling the details. Surely you remember them, given that the Republicans described each “scandal” in its time as “worse than Watergate.” We might call the Biden impeachment inquiry a fishing expedition, but that’s been long underway. Even before they won their ma-

jority, Republicans were trying to implicate Biden—somehow—for the lobbying sins of his long-troubled son Hunter. No less than Peter Doocy, the White House correspondent for Faux News who often verbally jousts with the president, told his audience this week, “The House Oversight Committee has been at this for years, and they have so far not been able to provide any concrete evidence that Joe Biden personally profited from his son Hunter’s overseas business.” Back in September the former speaker, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, as part of his unsuccessful bid to appease his right wing and save his job, ordered several House committees to look into impeaching Biden, though they were already doing that to little avail. (The announcement was simply semantics.) Now it’s McCarthy’s successor, Speaker “MAGA Mike” Johnson of Louisiana, who called for the vote that would make an inquiry all official-like, and enhance the House’s power to enforce subpoenas. That focus on subpoena power is especially rich. Recall that a number of these House members, including McCarthy and Biden antagonist Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, defied subpoenas from the House Jan. 6 committee, which sought their firsthand accounts of Trump’s activities on and before that day. Why vote now for an impeachment inquiry? Because party leaders finally had enough Republican votes to authorize it. As one of the balky moderates, Rep. Don Bacon of Nebraska, told Punchbowl News this week, “I can defend an inquiry. I can’t defend impeachment right now.” Yet articles of impeachment can’t be far behind. By putting a formal label on the whole matter, the Republicans all but commit themselves to coming up with charges, however specious. Can you imagine them simply closing up the investigatory shop without an impeachment vote in election year 2024, thereby enraging their likely presidential nominee, Donald Trump, along with the party’s MAGA base?

By **JACKIE CALMES**
Los Angeles Times

Jackie Calmes is an opinion columnist for the Los Angeles Times in Washington, D.C.



As Trump warned on his social media site in August, “Either IMPEACH the BUM, or fade into OBLIVION.” Should the House indeed impeach Biden, the Senate then would have to conduct a trial—amid the presidential campaign. That, of course, is the real point: Weaken Biden and create a political parallel to Trump’s criminal trials. Some Republicans in the Senate, who’d serve on the Biden jury in the event of an impeachment trial, are skeptical. “I don’t see the grounds for this yet,” said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, a member of the Republican leadership. Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota plainly agrees. If they can’t make a much stronger case than they have so far, he said, they’ll be seen “as crying wolf.” Indeed. “Impeachment used to be taken pretty seriously,” said Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski. Like back in early 2021, when she took Trump’s impeachment for inciting an insurrection seriously enough to be one of seven Republican senators who voted to convict him. House Republicans, however, are not serious people doing serious business for the nation. If they were, they might have some actual achievements to boast about as this year draws to an end. As one of their own recently bellowed from the House floor: “Give me one thing—one!—that I can go campaign on.” He’s still waiting.

US
From page 8

Holiday history and Happy Hannukah

LITERARY NOOK
By **JOEY CONNOLLY**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



When students asked questions about Jesus birthday I would tell them Jesus was born, raised and died a Jew. They asked what’s a Jew and some said they had never met a Jew. I told them a Jewish prophet named Moses brought the Ten Commandments, which they knew about, from Mt. Sinai. Biblical scholars agree that Christ was born sometime between April 1 and Sept. 30, 4 B.C. “December 25th was originally a pagan holiday, worshipping the birthday of the sun. Christian missionaries tried to Christianize that holiday by calling it the birthday of the Son (of God) and it stuck.” So several years ago I wrote these senryu to explain a major Jewish holiday which often occurs (because Jews use a lunar calendar) around Christmas time. Hanukkah 2023 was from Dec. 7, 2023 to Fri. Dec. 15, 2023. Next Year Chanukkah will begin on Dec. 25 - Jan. 2.

Twass the night before mix and match
(a satire on the commercialization of Christmas)

Twass the holiday sale for Mix and Match
at the closest neighborhood knickknack store
buying useless things for gifts in a batch
stale stuff you have bought many times before

My stockings are hung on the front screen door
airing out stench in fresh incoming air

baking soda in my shoes on the floor
one sock is missing but I don’t know where

Big holidays ahead, two in a row
I’m shopping and schlepping day after day
schlock stuff for relatives every time I go
using my credit card later to pay

Whether the night before or day after
let’s hope holidays are filled with laughter.

Happy Holiday Hannukah Haiku

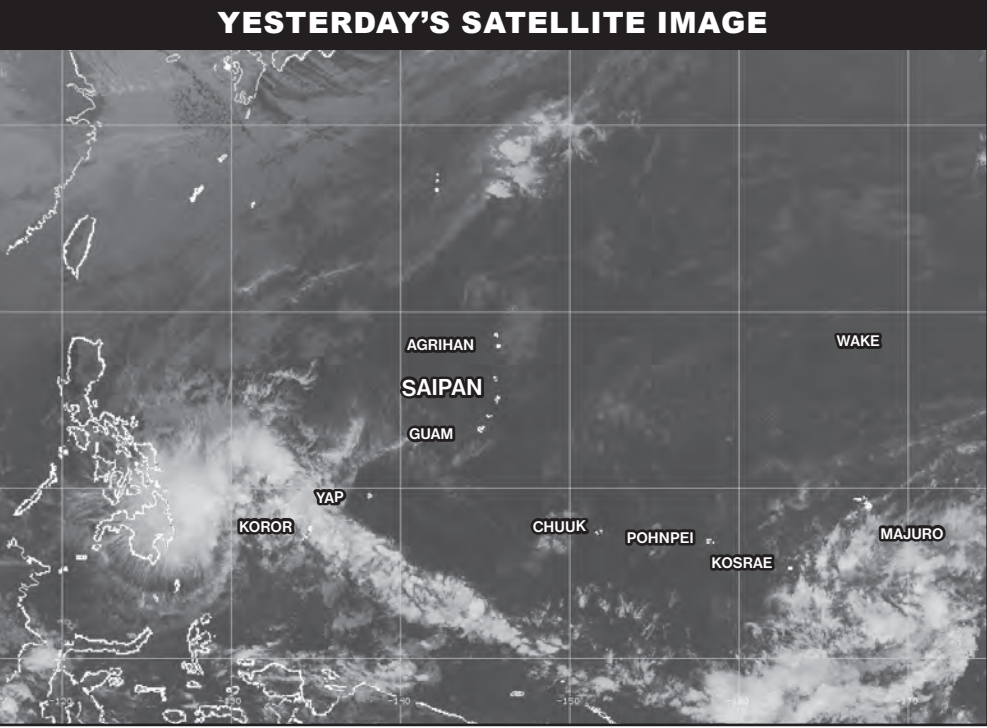
I wrote these for my students on Tinian
about 25 years ago. Chanukkah often occurs
around the same time as Christmas and is
called the Festival of Lights. It is celebrated
for eight days. If you would like to learn
about Hannukah read these. In Yiddish,
Chag Sameach! Happy Holiday!

Temple lamp lit for one night/
stayed lit for 8 / so we remember.
First night one candle / light a new candle
each night / a blessing each day.
Festival of Lights / say “nas gadol haya
sham” / for 8 successive days.
Judah Maccabee said /a great miracle
happened here / Chanukkah time.
Eight branch menorah candle lit / temple
rededication/ on the date 25 Kislev.
Hanukkah is complete / with 8 candles lit
in the menorah / giving gelt (gold but now
chocolate) gifts, potato latkes (potato
pancakes) and song.
Spin the top (dredl) now/ and sing the song/
‘savivon sov sov sov, dredl spin spin spin.
Menorah aglow/ it is a Jewish holiday/
Happy Hanukkah!

from horror but also hope that cease-fires might be extended and just maybe lead to talks and a sustainable period free from cross-border attacks. Or even an accord paving the way to lasting peace. The recent history of the Middle East consists of two urgent struggles. The obvious one pits Israel against Hamas, a terrorist organization, as each vows to annihilate the other and refers to its enemy in subhuman terms. The second contest is even more existential. It’s between the human aspiration to seek peace, despite real provocations and long-standing grievances, and the baser instinct to exterminate the enemy once and for all, notwithstanding the cost to innocent lives and gross violation of international laws of war. In this struggle, the United States should choose a path that might make peace in the future still possible. It should reverse its position against a cease-fire. Acknowledging its own mistakes in response to 9/11—as Biden noted at the start of the current war—the U.S. should use its stature as a powerful democracy and its loyalty to and support of Israel to demand another respite from horror. And then it should work to make that pause a lasting cessation of hostilities. Israel, as a fellow industrialized democracy with state-of-the-art intelligence, technology and defense capability, has set high standards for its response to attack. It has in the past deployed precision operations, such as the 1976 Entebbe raid to free airline passengers held hostage in Uganda by Palestinian and German hijackers. The current indiscriminate killing in Gaza, in which two-thirds of the dead are women and children, bears little resemblance to surgical strikes and reveals little apparent distinction by Israel between legitimate Hamas targets and innocent civilians. Netanyahu’s comparison with 9/11 may be more apt than he realizes. After the al-Qaida attack, the U.S. enjoyed the world’s support against terrorism, then squandered it by its brutal tactics in the war. Today the Taliban again rule in Kabul. Al-Qaida is diminished, but Islamic extremism remains. Even if Israel succeeds in destroying Hamas, Palestinian statelessness, hopelessness and dehumanization will persist and are likely to give rise to new hostilities. Hope for change in this seemingly intractable conflict can begin when wholesale killing ends.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
87	78°	87	78°	87	78°	87	78°	87	78°



PICTURE TIME: 6:09 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery indicating mainly partly cloudy skies and isolated showers across the Marianas. Buoys and latest altimetry passes are showing seas 7 to 10 feet. Winds are moderate to fresh.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Tuesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Thursday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Friday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	11:13 AM	11:08 PM	-
Tuesday	11:55 AM	-	-
Wednesday	-	12:05 AM	12:35 PM
Thursday	-	1:00 AM	1:14 PM
Friday	-	1:54 AM	1:55 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 59°	
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 16°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	64° / 57°	
Honolulu	Windy	80° / 71°	
London	Cloudy	46° / 43°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	67° / 49°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	90° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	90° / 68°	
Miami	Sunny	66° / 54°	
New York	Sunny	39° / 31°	
Osaka	Showers	57° / 43°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	46° / 34°	
Busan	Sunny	43° / 30°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 34°	
Salem	Sunny	56° / 29°	
San Francisco	Sunny	57° / 50°	
Seoul	Sunny	36° / 19°	
Tokyo	Rain	52° / 43°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	44° / 30°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
3:00 AM	Low Tide	-0.79	
10:25 AM	High Tide	1.78	
3:36 PM	Low Tide	1.24	
8:06 PM	High Tide	1.77	

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. <i>(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)</i>							

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023					
SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

FED ON CUSP OF WHAT SOME THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE

Defeating inflation without steep recession

WASHINGTON (AP)—It was the most painful inflation Americans had experienced since 1981, when “The Dukes of Hazzard” and “The Jeffersons” were topping the TV charts. Yet the Federal Reserve now seems on the verge of defeating it—and without the surge in unemployment and the deep recession that many economists had predicted would accompany it.

Inflation has been falling more or less steadily since peaking in June of last year at 9.1%. And when the Fed’s preferred inflation gauge for November is reported next week, it’s likely to show that in the past six months, annual inflation actually dipped just below the Fed’s target of 2%, economists at UBS estimate.

The cost of goods—such as used cars, furniture and appliances—has fallen for six straight months. Compared with a year ago, goods prices are unchanged, held down by improved global supply chains.

Housing and rental costs, a major driver of inflation, are growing more slowly. Wage growth has cooled, too, though it still tops inflation. Milder wage growth tends to ease pressure on restaurants, hotels and other employers to increase their prices to cover their labor costs.

“I think it’s really good to see the progress that we’re making,” Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference Wednesday after the Fed’s latest policy meeting. “If you look at the ... six-month measures, you see very low numbers.”

On Friday, the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpar-



In this photo made with a slow shutter speed, Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference on Dec. 13, 2023, in Washington.

tisan agency, estimated that inflation will drop to 2.1% by the end of next year.

There will likely be bumps on the road toward getting inflation fully under control, officials have said. Powell insisted that “no one is declaring victory.” And he reiterated that the central bank wants to see further evidence of falling inflation before it would feel confident that it is sustainably headed back to the 2% target.

Yet many economists, normally a cautious lot, are now willing to declare that inflation is nearly back under control after two-plus years in which it imposed hardships on millions of American households.

“It appears that inflation has

returned to 2%,” said Tim Duy, chief economist at SGH Macroeconomics. “The Fed looks like it has won that battle.”

Prices spikes are also moderating overseas, with both the Bank of England and European Central Bank keeping their benchmark interest rates unchanged this week. Though inflation is still at 4.6% in the United Kingdom, it has fallen to 2.4% in the 20 countries that use the euro currency.

With inflation cooling, Powell said the 19 officials on the Fed’s policy setting committee had discussed the prospects for rate cuts at this week’s meeting. The officials also projected that the Fed will cut its key interest rate

three times next year.

That stance marked a drastic shift from the rate-hiking campaign the Fed began in March 2022. Beginning then, the central bank raised its bench-

mark rate 11 times, from near zero to roughly 5.4%, its highest level in 22 years, to try to slow borrowing, spending and inflation. The result was much higher costs for mortgages,

auto loans, business borrowing and other forms of credit.

Powell’s suddenly more optimistic words, and the Fed’s rate-cut projections, sent stock market indexes soaring this week. Wall Street traders now foresee a roughly 80% likelihood that the first rate cut will occur when the Fed meets in March, and they are forecasting a total of six cuts in 2024.

On Friday, John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and a top lieutenant of Powell’s, sought to pour some cold water on those expectations. Speaking on CNBC, Williams said it was “premature to be even thinking” about whether to cut rates in March. But he also mentioned that his forecast was for inflation to move down “sustainably” to 2%.

The week’s events represented a departure from just two weeks ago, when Powell had said it was “premature” to say whether the Fed had raised its key rate high enough to fully conquer high inflation. On Wednesday, he suggested that the Fed was almost certainly done with rate increases.

After 40 witnesses, 43 days of testimony, here's what we learned at Trump's civil fraud trial

NEW YORK (AP)—After hearing from 40 witnesses over 2½ months, Judge Arthur Engoron sounded almost wistful as he presided over the last day of testimony in former President Donald Trump’s civil business fraud trial.

“In a strange way, I’m gonna miss this trial,” he said Wednesday.

Things aren’t over yet in the case, in which New York Attorney General Letitia James has accused Trump of inflating his wealth on financial statements used to secure loans and make deals.

Closing arguments are scheduled for early January. The judge has already ruled that Trump is liable for making fraudulent statements, but other claims and a potential final penalty still need to be decided. Trump denies any wrongdoing. He says the financial documents actually understated his net worth and came with caveats that should shield him from liability.

The trial has offered fresh insight into Trump’s finances, his dealings with lenders, his aspiration to be an NFL owner, and some of the fuzzy math—mistaken or intentional—at issue in the case.

The trial also gave a glimpse of the Republican 2024 presidential front-runner’s political and legal strategies as his court and campaign calendars increasingly overlap. The first of his four criminal trials is scheduled for March.

So far, Trump’s legal woes aren’t denting his standing in the Republican presidential race. He leads by a wide margin in national and early-state polls. In fact, his lead is stronger than it was before his first criminal indictment in March.

Here are some other things we learned from the trial:

Trump wasn’t required to be in court, except for the one day he testified, but he showed up eight times as a spectator.

Every time, he turned his appearance into a de facto campaign stop, griping outside the courtroom that he was being persecuted. He had the same message during his often defiant turn on the witness stand Nov. 6.

“This is a very unfair trial, very, very. And I hope the public is watching it,” Trump said. His testimony led a frustrated Engoron to warn, “This is not a political rally.”

Trump didn’t go to court last year when his company was

convicted of tax fraud. Nor did he show for a civil trial where a jury found him liable for sexually assaulting writer E. Jean Carroll and ordered him to pay her \$5 million.

Why attend the fraud trial? “Because I want to point it out to the press, how corrupt it is,” Trump said.

Outside court, he frequently insulted the judge and even Engoron’s chief law clerk. After Trump made a false, disparaging comment about the clerk’s personal life on social media, Engoron imposed a gag order barring trial participants from commenting further about court staff.

The judge later found that Trump repeatedly violated the order and fined him \$15,000.

Much of the trial was devoted to the hundreds of millions of dollars Deutsche Bank loaned Trump’s company, starting in 2011.

The state says Trump rooked his way into the financing, at attractive interest rates, by padding his wealth. The defendants say they didn’t and maintain the bank was delighted with the loans. All were paid off, the last of them during the trial.

Budget Office projects lower inflation, higher unemployment into 2025

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Congressional Budget Office said Friday it expects inflation to nearly hit the Federal Reserve’s 2% target rate in 2024, as overall growth is expected to slow and unemployment is expected to rise into 2025, according to updated economic projections for the next two years.

The office’s Current View of the Economy from 2023 to 2025 report estimates that the unemployment rate will hit 4.4% in the fourth quarter of 2024 and remain close to that level through 2025.

Currently, the unemployment rate is 3.7%, according to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Meanwhile, gross domes-

tic product, otherwise known as the overall health of the economy, is estimated to fall from 2.5% in 2023 to 1.5% in 2024—then rebound to 2.2% in 2025, according to the CBO projections.

Compared with its February 2023 projections, CBO’s Friday report predicts weaker growth, lower unemployment, and higher interest rates in 2024 and 2025.

But in a reminder that the U.S. economy has seldom behaved as anticipated through the pandemic and its aftermath, the employment forecast looks very different from the pace of hiring so far this year.

The jobless rate has now remained below 4% for nearly two years, the longest such

streak since the late 1960s.

And on the inflation front, most economists expect growth to slow and inflation to continue to decline.

This week, the Federal Reserve kept its key interest rate unchanged for a third straight time, and its officials signaled that they are edging closer to cutting rates as early as next summer.

At a news conference, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said that officials are likely done raising rates because of how steadily inflation has cooled.

In keeping with the agency’s mandate to provide objective, impartial analysis, the report makes no policy recommendations, CBO director Phillip Swagel said in the report.

Nation

\$148M damages verdict adds to Giuliani's financial woes

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A criminal trial awaits Rudy Giuliani in Georgia. He is an alleged unnamed co-conspirator in a federal indictment against Donald Trump. And now he's been ordered to pay a sum he surely cannot afford.

The \$148 million verdict in a defamation case brought by two former Georgia election workers marks a new low point for the man once lauded as "America's mayor," whose advocacy of Donald Trump's false election claims has led to criminal charges and hefty legal bills. And the jury's verdict could be a troubling sign for Giuliani as he gears up to defend himself against charges in Georgia that could land him behind bars.

"It's like everything is crashing down on him," said Nick Akerman, a New York attorney who briefly worked alongside Giuliani in the federal prosecutors' office there. "He hasn't come to grips with what he has done to his life. He has completely destroyed himself."

A defiant Giuliani vowed Friday to appeal, calling the damages award for Ruby Freeman and her daughter, Wanda "Shaye" Moss, "absurd." Outside Washington's federal courthouse after the verdict, he repeated his claims that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump. And in a video later on X, formerly known as Twitter, he insisted he did nothing wrong, and suggested he will



Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani speaks during a news conference outside the federal courthouse in Washington, Friday, Dec. 15, 2023.

keep pressing his claims even if it means losing all his money or ending up in jail.

"If they want to put me in jail for it, if you want to shoot me for it ... you're not going to get me to lie," Giuliani said.

It's the latest chapter in a remarkable story that has taken Giuliani from the cover of Time Magazine as "Person of the Year" in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to being mocked on late night TV and facing legal and financial peril. Some who knew Giuliani when he was a young prosecutor who went on to lead the prominent U.S. attorney's office in New York's Southern District say

they hardly recognize the man they see on TV today.

"It's a shame because he had such promise," said John Flannery, another lawyer who worked alongside Giuliani as a federal prosecutor. "He was a very smart lawyer. He was very helpful to everybody in the office."

Ted Goodman, a political adviser to Giuliani, declined to comment on Saturday on the state of the former mayor's finances. But he said Giuliani has had "a positive impact on more people than almost anyone in public service."

"The Rudy Giuliani you see today is the same man who took down the Mafia,

cleaned up New York City, and comforted the nation following September 11th," Goodman said.

Giuliani has pleaded not guilty in the criminal case in Georgia, which accuses him of participating in a wide-ranging conspiracy to thwart the will of Georgia's voters who had selected Democrat Joe Biden over the Republican incumbent. He faces 13 charges, including violation of Georgia's anti-racketeering law, the federal version of which was one of his favorite tools as prosecutor in the 1980s.

He has called the indictment a "travesty," and argues he had every right to question

what he believed to be election fraud. He is also one of the co-conspirators listed in the federal case charging Trump with illegally working to overturn the results of the election, but Giuliani is not charged in that case.

The damages award in the defamation case followed emo-

tional testimony from the election workers, who described receiving a barrage of racist and graphic threats after they became the targets of a false conspiracy pushed by Giuliani and other Trump allies.

Giuliani had already been found liable in the case and he had conceded in court documents that he falsely accused the women of fraud. His lawyer had appealed for "compassion and sympathy," telling jurors: "I want you to remember this is a great man."

It's unclear whether the women will ever receive the sum of money. Even so, the verdict appeared to be a strong repudiation of false election fraud claims that are now central to the criminal cases against Trump — including the one brought by special counsel Jack Smith that jurors will hear in the same federal courthouse.

"If I were Donald Trump, I'd be scared out of my bejesus here, because if a jury like this in Washington, D.C., nails Rudy to the wall like they did yesterday, you can imagine what's going to happen when that trial goes forward," Akerman said.

As holidays dawn, face masks settled in as occasional feature of US landscape

NEW YORK (AP)—The scene: A crowded shopping center in the weeks before Christmas. Or a warehouse store. Or maybe a packed airport terminal or a commuter train station or another place where large groups gather.

There are people — lots of people. But look around, and it's clear one thing is largely absent these days: face masks.

Yes, there's the odd one here and there, but nothing like it was three years ago at the dawn of the COVID pandemic's first winter holidays — an American moment of contentiousness, accusation and scorn on both sides of the mask debate.

As 2023 draws to an end, with promises of holiday parties and crowds and lots of inadvertent exchanges of shared air, mask-wearing is much more off than on around the country even as COVID's long tail lingers. The days of anything approaching a widespread mask mandate would be like the Ghost of Christmas Past, a glimpse into what was.

Look at it a different way, though: These days, mask-wearing has become just another thing that simply happens in America. In a country where the mention of a mask prior to the pandemic usually meant Hal-

loween or a costume party, it's a new way of being that hasn't gone away even if most people aren't doing it regularly.

"That's an interesting part of the pandemic," says Brooke Tully, a strategist who works on how to change people's behaviors.

"Home delivery of food and all of those kind of services, they existed before COVID and actually were gaining some momentum," she says. "But something like mask-wearing in the U.S. didn't really have an existing baseline. It was something entirely new in COVID. So it's one of those new introductions of behaviors and norms."

It tends to be situational, like the recent decision from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center hospital system to reinstate a mask mandate at its facilities starting Dec. 20 because it's seeing an increase in respiratory viruses. And for people like Sally Kiser, 60, of Mooresville, North Carolina, who manages a home health care agency.

"I always carry one with me," she says, "cause I never know."

She doesn't always wear it, depending on the environment she's in, but she will if she thinks it's prudent. "It's kind of like a new paradigm for the world we live in," she says.

As Trump threatens to repeal Obamacare, these 'insurance godmothers' signing Florida Latinos up

MIAMI (AP)—Salsa music blares from the food court in a rundown Miami shopping center as Latinos head to a kiosk and an office showing signs for "Obamacare," where they hope to renew their health coverage plans before the year ends.

It's areas near this mall where former Democratic President Barack Obama's health care overhaul is more popular than anywhere in the country, according to federal data. The region has also shifted away from Democrats to Republicans in recent years, with Donald Trump hosting several rallies here as part of his outreach to Latino voters.

Trump, the current front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, has pledged to renew efforts to repeal and replace the 2010 law — something that would be felt heavily in the region and could possibly reverse some of the

GOP shift among South Florida's Latinos, experts say.

President Joe Biden's re-election campaign has already seized on Trump's statements about "Obamacare," which was enacted when Biden was vice president, as part of its broader efforts to shape the widely expected rematch with Trump next year.

"Health insurance is something that is extremely needed for everyone," said Odalys Arevalo, one of the managing partners of a health insurance agency serving Spanish-speaking clients in Miami. "And I know that everybody that supports the Republican Party that has health insurance through Obamacare would not support the fact that it would be taken away from one day to another. That is a fact."

Arevalo and her business partner, Mercy Cabrera, started enrollment centers to help people navigate the Affordable Care

Act's insurance marketplaces and remember how some Cubans would walk away uttering "no, no, no," after seeing the name "Obamacare," which was coined by Republicans opposing the overhaul as an expensive government takeover of health insurance.

Insurers could no longer deny coverage based on preexisting medical conditions, and that drew many Latinos to consider it, Arevalo says. In the following years, the women started enrolling tens of thousands, earning the nickname of "Madrinas del Obamacare," or "Obamacare" godmothers, evoking the crucial role godparents play in Latino culture.

They have since renamed themselves "Las Madrinass de los Seguros," or "insurance godmothers," because they offer other plans. But they continue to feature the word "Obamacare" on their office

walls and in their ads.

"Obamacare" is seen throughout Miami in advertising flags, businesses and bus signs. Federal data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services indicates how widely used it is here.

About 3.4 million Hispanics are signed up with insurance through the health law. Florida leads enrollment with more than 3.2 million consumers selecting a plan during last year's enrollment period from November 2022 to January. Miami-Dade is the county with the most people enrolled, with about 750,000 consumers, or more than one-fourth of the total population.

Florida is also one of 10 states that has resisted expanding Medicaid coverage under a provision of the health law.

The two Zip codes with the most sign-ups last year and this year are in Doral and Hialeah, hubs for the Venezuelan and Cuban communities that are just north of Miami and are common stops for Trump's visits and rallies.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

US-China relations defined by rivalry but must include engagement, American ambassador says

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S.-China relationship will be defined by strategic competition in the coming decades but must involve engagement when the interests of the two countries align, the U.S. ambassador to China said Friday, one month after President Joe Biden met with Chinese President Xi Jinping to stabilize the fraught relations. Nicholas Burns said the U.S. and China are “vying for global power as well as regional power” as they compete militarily, politically and economically. “I think we are systematic rivals, if you think about our national security and economic and political interests around the world,” Burns said at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank. In the Indo-Pacific region, China “wishes to be the strongest power,” Burns said. “China has a very different view of global governance and the future of the liberal order,” he said. “And of course, we are attached to a liberal order because it speaks to our values and our interests, and we think this is the best order of the world.” Yet, the two countries need to work together on issues such as climate change, narcotics, global health and food security, he said. “No person in their right mind should want this relationship to end up in conflict or in war,” he said. “So we’re going to develop a relationship where we can compete, but, as the president says, to compete responsibly, drive down the probability of a conflict and bring our people together in a balanced relationship is one way to do that.”

More than 100 injured in Beijing rail collision as heavy snow hits the Chinese capital

BEIJING (AP)—Two subway trains collided in heavy snow in Beijing, sending 515 people to the hospital, including 102 with broken bones, authorities said Friday. The accident occurred Thursday evening in Beijing’s mountainous west on an above-ground portion of the sprawling subway system’s Changping line. Slippery tracks prompted automatic braking on the leading train. A train following from behind was on a descending section and went into a skid and was unable to brake in time, the city transport author-

ity said in a statement Friday on its social media account. Emergency medical personnel, police and transport authorities responded, and all passengers were evacuated by about 11 p.m., it said. Twenty-five passengers were under observation and 67 remained hospitalized Friday morning, the authority said. Unusually heavy snow that began falling Wednesday has prompted the suspension of some train operations and school closures.

A leader of Taiwan’s Nationalist Party visits China as the island’s presidential election looms

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—A leader of Taiwan’s main opposition Nationalist Party is visiting rival China less than one month before the self-governing island republic holds elections for president and the legislature under intense pressure from Beijing.

In a news release Thursday, the party—also known as the Kuomintang or KMT—said vice chair Andrew Hsia and his delegation departed for China on Wednesday at the invitation of Taiwanese businesspeople. It called the trip a mission to maintain contacts and contribute to “peace, stability and prosperity between the two sides.” Though the party said the invitation was accepted in October, the visit comes at a sensitive time as the Nationalists seek to regain the presidency and legislature from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which has been shunned by China for its insistence that Taiwan is an independent country. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory, to be brought under its control by military force if necessary. The Nationalists ruled Taiwan under martial law for almost four decades after fleeing to the island amid the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949 and formally agree with Beijing that both sides are part of a single Chinese nation.

Japan, ASEAN bolster ties at summit focused on security, economy amid China tensions

TOKYO (AP)—Leaders from Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, at a special summit on Sunday marking their 50th anniversary of friendship, adopted a joint vision that emphasizes security and economic cooperation while respecting the rule of law amid growing tensions with China in regional seas.

Ties between Japan and ASEAN used to be largely based on Japanese assistance to the developing economies, in part due to lingering bitterness over Japan’s wartime actions. But in recent years the ties have focused more on security amid China’s growing assertiveness in the South China Sea, while Japan’s postwar pacifist stance and trust-building efforts have fostered friendlier relations. The leaders, in a joint statement, called for strengthening their “mutually beneficial” partnership and working together for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. They also called to pursue greater prosperity for the region and to promote people exchanges among the younger generations. Kishida told a joint news conference with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, this year’s ASEAN chair. The leaders adopted an implementation plan for 130 projects. Japan called to step up cooperation in security and defense, while reinforcing support for efforts in climate change and investment, including in the region’s automotive industry, he said.

5 officers and 5 militants die after attacks on police office and 2 army posts in northwest Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Militants attacked a regional police headquarters and two military posts in northwest Pakistan early Friday, triggering firefights that killed five security personnel and five insurgents, police and the military said. The attacks came three days after a suicide bomber in the same region rammed his car into a police station’s main gate and five others opened fire, killing 23 officers in this year’s worst attack on Pakistani security forces. The military and local police chief Ifthikhar Shah said three police officers were “martyred” and three others were wounded in an attack on the police headquarters in the town of Tank in Dera Ismail Khan, while a total of five attackers died in the ensuing shootouts. Hours later, Pakistani Taliban also attacked a military post in the northwestern Khyber region bordering Afghanistan, killing two soldiers and wounding five others, local police official Salim Khan said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for Friday’s attacks, but suspicion was likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

World

Netanyahu says Israel as ‘committed as ever’ to war



Families and supporters of Israeli hostages held by Hamas in Gaza attend a rally calling for their return, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023. AP

JERUSALEM (AP)—Three Israeli hostages who were mistakenly shot by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip had been waving a white flag and were shirtless when they were killed, military officials said Saturday, in Israel’s first such acknowledgement of harming any hostages in its war against Hamas.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a nationwide address that the killings “broke my heart, broke the entire nation’s heart,” but he indicated no change in Israel’s intensive military campaign. “We are as committed as ever to continue until the end, until we dismantle Hamas, until we return all our hostages,” he said.

Anger over the mistaken killings is likely to increase pressure on the Israeli gov-

ernment to renew Qatar-mediated negotiations with Hamas over swapping more of the remaining captives, which Israel says number 129, for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel.

A senior Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, reiterated that there will be no further hostage releases until the war ends and Israel accepts the militant group’s conditions for an exchange. Netanyahu said Israel would never agree to such demands.

Israel’s account of how the three hostages were killed also raised questions about its soldiers’ conduct. Palestinians on several occasions have said Israeli soldiers opened fire as civilians tried to flee to safety. Hamas has claimed other hostages were previously killed by Israeli

fire or airstrikes, without presenting evidence.

An Israeli military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters in line with military regulations, said the hostages likely had been abandoned by their captors or had escaped. The soldiers’ behavior was “against our rules of engagement,” the official said, and was being investigated at the highest level.

The hostages did everything they could to signal they weren’t a threat, “but this shooting was done during fighting and under pressure,” Herzi Halevi, chief of the military’s general staff, said in a statement.

Halevi added: “There may be additional incidents in which hostages will escape or will be abandoned during the fighting. We have the obligation and the responsibility to get them out alive.”

Over 60 drown in migrant vessel off Libya while trying to reach Europe, UN says

CAIRO (AP)—A boat carrying dozens of Europe-bound migrants capsized off the coast of Libya, leaving more than 60 people—including women and children—dead, the U.N. migration agency said.

Saturday’s shipwreck was the latest tragedy in this part of the Mediterranean Sea, a key dangerous route for migrants seeking a better life in Europe, where, according to officials, thousands have died.

The U.N.’s International Organization for Migration said in a statement the boat was carrying 86 migrants when strong waves swamped it off the town of Zuwara on Libya’s western

coast and that 61 migrants drowned, citing survivors of the “dramatic shipwreck.”

“The central Mediterranean continues to be one of the world’s most dangerous migration routes,” the agency wrote on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East. The North African nation has plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

The country is a major launching point for migrants

trying to reach the European shores through the deadly central Mediterranean. More than 2,250 people died on this route this year, according to Flavio Di Giacomo, an IOM spokesperson.

It’s “a dramatic figure which demonstrates that unfortunately not enough is being done to save lives at sea,” Di Giacomo wrote on X.

Human traffickers in recent years have benefited from the chaos in Libya, smuggling in migrants across the country’s lengthy borders, which it shares with six nations. The migrants are crowded into ill-equipped vessels, including rubber boats, and set off on risky sea voyages.

Health & Wellness

Minimizing stress and maximizing health can make the holiday season more jolly

By MICHAEL PRECKER
American Heart Association News

Between economic struggles, political division and life's everyday pressures, the year has already been stressful enough for many people.

And now, here come the holidays: food and beverage temptations, crowded airports and traffic jams, and family gatherings, which can be great but maybe not always.

"The holidays can be a source of joy and wonder," said Dr. Alan Koenigsberg, a psychiatrist in private practice and a volunteer clinical professor of psychiatry at the UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. "But they can also be a source of pain and stress."

Before the holiday season, said Dr. Christopher Bauchman, a clinical psychologist in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, "I like to give people homework exercises, things that they can practice. So if something does pop up, you feel like you're more prepared."

The implications of stress aren't just psychological. Researchers have documented the links between chronic stress and increased incidence of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and other risk factors for cardiovascular disease. A 2021 study in Hypertension found people with high levels of the stress hormone cortisol



Researchers have documented the links between chronic stress and increased incidence of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and other risk factors for cardiovascular disease. AHAN

had an increased risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other cardiovascular event.

Even short-term stress can have health consequences. Watching a stressful World Cup soccer match more than doubled the risk of a cardiac emergency, according to a German study published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2008.

"It's hard to avoid stress,"

Koenigsberg said. "But minimizing stress is important for overall health as well as cardiovascular health."

That can be harder during the holidays for several reasons, he said.

"Just traveling is stressful," Koenigsberg said. "Then there's the preparation, all the cooking and cleaning. Then there's family dynamics. Some families get along won-

derfully, and it's a tremendous source of pleasure. For other families, it can be tremendously stressful to get together with people you don't see that often and everybody's supposed to be happy."

Aside from the external factors, he said, "There are people who have lost loved ones or people who have been through abusive situations, and the holidays them-

selves can be difficult."

Bauchman recommends the same mindfulness techniques he advocates throughout the year, from deep breathing and exercise to gratitude journals and challenging internal negative thoughts.

"The three most important things we can control in our everyday life are sleep, diet and exercise," he said. "So, continue to incorporate those healthy factors, whether hosting family or traveling. Try to maintain as normal a routine as you can while we're going through the holidays."

Bauchman and Koenigsberg offered other tips to manage stress over the holidays:

Feast wisely. "During the holidays, we'll eat a little more and that's OK," Koenigsberg said. "This is not the time to stress yourself and try to lose weight. Just eat healthy, have reasonable portions and enjoy yourself."

Manage your gift-giving. Coming from a large family, Bauchman said, the gift lists would be long and expensive. "So, we do a Secret Santa," dividing up the burden, he said. "And we set a cap on how much to spend."

Socialize. "If you don't have family and friends to be with, you've got to be social," Koenigsberg said. "One of the concerns during the holidays is people who

are isolated. Please go out and be with people. Perhaps do something meaningful, like volunteering."

Get outside. "Spend time in nature," Bauchman advised. "The more time you spend in a tranquil place, the lower your depression, the lower your stress, and the better your quality of life is. You're getting healthy oxygen into your system."

Koenigsberg concurred. "Our body has over 600 muscles," he said. "They're meant to move, the more the better."

Have reasonable expectations. "If you assume everything's going to go flawlessly, you're setting yourself up for major disappointment," Koenigsberg said. "Sometimes the holidays may not work out perfectly or be a completely pleasant time. You go through it and you move on."

Just say no. "You have to ask yourself, 'What's my limit to what I can manage?'" Bauchman said. "You have to be honest with yourself and not try to do everything."

You know this one's coming. It's become a standard recommendation for families with divergent political opinions sitting down to dinner together: Keep stress-inducing controversy off the holiday table.

"You have the entire rest of the year to get into arguments," Koenigsberg said.

Heart health tips for when the mercury dips

By MICHAEL MERSCHER
American Heart Association News

Winter is the right time of year for all kinds of cool activities—skiing, skating and ice fishing, just to name a few.

Unfortunately, as the temperature falls, the risk of heart problems heats up. Even if you live far from the nearest iceberg, cold weather can pose problems. Studies have linked low temperatures to an increased risk of stroke, heart-related chest pain, heart rhythm problems and deaths from heart failure and cardiac arrest.

Cardiologist Dr. Sherrie Khadanga said an increased risk of heart attack is a top concern in cold weather. "Usually that ends up due to a patient overexerting themselves doing strenuous physical activity, such as shoveling or walking through heavy snow," said Khadanga, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Vermont's Larner College of Medicine in Burlington.

Dr. Richard Gumina, an interventional cardiologist and associate professor at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus, said cardiac arrest—a sudden stoppage of the heart—is a related concern in the cold. "Sometimes cardiac arrest can be due to a heart attack," said Gumina, who also is associate dean for convergent research at Ohio State's College of Medicine. "Other times it can be due to heart rhythm problems that can be brought on by doing strenuous activity and cold weather."

One of the main risk factors, Khadanga said, comes from your body's basic reaction to the cold. To conserve warmth, blood vessels constrict to limit blood flow to your skin, which raises your blood pressure. "And that, in and of itself, can increase the risk of a heart attack or a stroke," she said.

The lower the air temperature, the worse the problem, she said, and the concern is highest among people with

existing heart disease, whose blood flow is already restricted. But many people are unaware they have heart disease until they start having symptoms such as chest pain, Gumina said.

Even people living in warm climates can be affected. A review of research, published in March in Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine, looked at data from several studies and found that overall, cold spells increased deaths from cardiovascular disease by 32%. The effect was more pronounced in areas where the weather is typically milder than areas that see cold regularly.

But, in news that should warm your heart, Gumina and Khadanga offered simple ways people can protect themselves.

Wear the gear

Khadanga tells her patients that when they're outside, "not only should they be wearing layers of clothing, but also hats, gloves and

heavy socks" to stay warm.

To that, Gumina adds a mask, "so you're not taking in just cold air."

But don't overdo it, Khadanga said. "You want to dress warmly if you're outside, but you don't want to overheat."

Shoveling snow? Go slow

Several studies have linked snow shoveling to a higher risk of heart attacks. Part of the problem, Gumina said, is that people who aren't usually physically active will attempt it. The combination of a heart that is not conditioned for heavy lifting plus cold-constricted blood vessels that might also be partially blocked from plaque can leave a heart starving for the oxygen-rich blood it needs to function.

Gumina said he advises his patients with heart disease to get help to clear the driveway. But those who insist on doing it themselves need to be careful.

Just as you wouldn't jump on a treadmill set at the highest level and steepest angle and start running, he said, you shouldn't run right out to the driveway and vigorously attack the drifts. "Ensure that

you've given yourself a little warmup period," he said.

Then, "bite it off in small pieces," he said, with frequent breaks. And know the symptoms of a heart attack, which can include chest discomfort, shortness of breath and nausea.

Stay active – carefully

In Vermont, Khadanga is surrounded by people who ski, snowboard and do other outdoor activities in the cold. Even for healthy, active people, taking breaks is important, she said. "You do a couple of runs down the hill, then you go back inside to warm up," she said.

Staying physically active is a crucial component of heart health, and you shouldn't be afraid to go out in the cold, Gumina said. But you have to be aware of potential problems.

Gumina said winter is the wrong time of year to plunge into an outdoor exercise routine. "You want to have a period ahead of time where you've been exercising, and then you can transition into something that is cold." And if you are going out in the cold

weather, "I always tell people to go in pairs," because of the risk of slipping on ice.

And stay hydrated, he said. "You don't realize how much you sweat during that time when you're in cold weather."

Stock up on meds

Khadanga reminds her patients to make sure that they fill prescriptions before winter storms arrive. "Snow and ice can make the roads extra slippery, and I wouldn't want a patient to run out of necessary medication."

Vaccines are a heart health issue

Cold weather sends people indoors, which boosts the risk of catching the flu or COVID-19. Research shows the risk of having a heart attack is six times higher within a week of having the flu, and COVID-19 has been linked to substantial risk of heart problems and stroke.

"Everyone needs a flu shot and their COVID vaccination," Gumina said. "These are things that we know decrease your risk of having severe disease."

Life & Style

Matthew Perry died from the effects of ketamine, autopsy report says

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Matthew Perry died from the acute effects of the anesthetic ketamine, according to the results of an autopsy on the 54-year-old “Friends” actor released Friday.

The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner said in the autopsy report that Perry also drowned in “the heated end of his pool,” but that it was a secondary factor in his Oct. 28 death, deemed an accident.

People close to Perry told investigators that he was undergoing ketamine infusion therapy, an experimental treatment used to treat depression and anxiety. But the medical examiner said the levels of ketamine in Perry’s body were in the range used for general anesthesia during surgery, and that his last treatment 1 1/2 weeks earlier wouldn’t explain those levels. The drug is typically metabolized in a matter of hours.

The report says coronary artery disease and buprenorphine, which is used to treat opioid use disorder, also contributed.

The amount of ketamine detected “would be enough to



AP
Matthew Perry poses for a portrait on Feb. 17, 2015, in New York. Perry, 54.

make him lose consciousness and lose his posture and his ability to keep himself above the water,” said Dr. Andrew Stolbach, a medical toxicologist with Johns Hopkins Medicine who reviewed the autopsy report at the request of The Associated Press.

“Using sedative drugs in a pool or hot tub, especially when you’re alone, is extremely risky and, sadly, here it’s fatal,” said Stolbach, who noted that both ketamine and buprenor-

phine can be used safely.

Perry was declared dead after being found unresponsive at his home in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. Investigators performed the autopsy the following day.

The actor had taken drugs in the past but had been “reportedly clean for 19 months,” according to the report.

Perry had played pickleball earlier in the day, the report says, and his assistant, who lives with him, found him face

down in the pool after returning from errands.

The assistant told investigators Perry had not been sick, had not made any health complaints, and had not shown evidence of recent alcohol or drug use.

Postmortem blood tests showed “high levels” of ketamine in his system, which could have raised his blood pressure and heart rate and dulled his impulse to breathe.

Buprenorphine, commonly

used in opioid addiction and found in therapeutic levels in Perry’s blood, could have contributed to the breathing problem, the autopsy said. It would have been risky to mix

the central nervous system depressant with ketamine “due to the additive respiratory effects when present with high levels of ketamine,” according to the autopsy report.

Mayim Bialik says she's out as host of TV quiz show 'Jeopardy!'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mayim Bialik won’t be giving answers as a host of “Jeopardy!” anymore.

“The Big Bang Theory” actor posted news of her departure on Instagram on Friday.

“Sony has informed me that I will no longer be hosting the syndicated version of Jeopardy!” Bialik wrote. “I am incredibly honored to have been nominated for a primetime Emmy for hosting this year and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the Jeopardy! family.”

Former show champion Ken Jennings has been hosting season 40 of the syndicated show by himself.

Sony Pictures Television

in a statement noted Bialik was the one who announced her departure.

“We made the decision to have one host for the syndicated show next season to maintain continuity for our viewers, and Ken Jennings will be the sole host for syndicated Jeopardy!” Sony said. “We are truly grateful for all of Mayim’s contributions to Jeopardy!, and we hope to continue to work with her on primetime specials.”

Bialik and Jennings had split hosting duties on “Jeopardy!,” but Bialik was the solo host for season 1 of “Celebrity Jeopardy!” In May, Bialik declared her support for the Hollywood writers’ strike and declined to appear on the game show.



AP
Mayim Bialik arrives at the Los Angeles LGBT Center Gala on Saturday, April 22, 2023, at the Fairmont Century Plaza.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar falls and breaks hip at Los Angeles concert

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was undergoing surgery for a broken hip Saturday after falling at a concert in Los Angeles.

The NBA Hall of Famer was attending a show Friday night when he was injured. Paramedics at the undisclosed venue responded and the 76-year-old was taken to Ronald Reagan

UCLA Medical Center.

His business partner, Deborah Morales, declined to provide a further update Saturday and referred only to a statement posted on Abdul-Jabbar’s social media.

“We are all deeply appreciative of all the support for Kareem,” it said.

Abdul-Jabbar was a key play-

er on the Los Angeles Lakers’ teams during their “Showtime” era in the 1980s, leading them to five NBA championships. He was a six-time NBA MVP.

The 7-foot-2 center was the NBA’s career-scoring leader until being passed by current Laker LeBron James in February. Abdul-Jabbar owned the mark for 39 years.

He starred at UCLA, when he was known as Lew Alcindor and was a three-time national player of the year under coach John Wooden.

Abdul-Jabbar disclosed in 2020 that he had prostate cancer. In 2009, he said he had been diagnosed the previous year with chronic myeloid leukemia, a blood cancer.

Wife asks husband to do more to boost cash flow

DEAR ABBY: I’m a paramedic. My wife constantly asks me to pick up additional 12-hour shifts so we have more money coming in, but says she can’t do any more overtime at her job. She says she does so much work around the house that it makes us even.

She takes vacation time to go to theme parks and out with her friends while expecting me to save my time off and use it only when I can go with her. I don’t think this is fair. How do I address this without starting a fight?

TIRED IN THE EAST

DEAR TIRED: I agree that what your wife is doing isn’t fair. As to how to address it without starting a fight, a “fight” may be what you need to clear the air and work out your budget. A paramedic should not be working when they are exhausted. They need their wits about them, which may present a problem if they are not 100%.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for 18 years, so I know his family well. His mother and I have a cordial, but not warm, relationship that’s sometimes a lot of work. She has always been hard to shop for, but the last two times I’ve given her gifts (at Christmas and her last birthday), instead of a thank-you card, she actually returned the gifts with a note saying she’d never use them.

Now I’m not sure what to do. It’s obvious we have different tastes. When I ask her what she’d like, she demurs and says some-

thing like, “I’m sure you’ll choose something nice.” If I don’t send her a gift, it’s sure to be taken as a rebuff. What are my other options? (For what it’s worth, my husband has been no help here and considers gifts to be wholly my territory.)

CLUELESS IN OHIO

DEAR CLUELESS: It is a HUGE breach of etiquette to return gifts the way your mother-in-law has done. Now, if you must give her something, you are free to ask her what she COULD use. (Might she like a gift card from her favorite store?)

■■■

DEAR ABBY: For years, my sister has been planning to retire and move in with my husband and me. She lives out of state, so this is a major move for her. It was never a problem—until now. She is a strong anti-vax advocate and refuses to get vaccinated for COVID. My husband said she can’t move in with us unless she is. How can I tell her diplomatically that she’s no longer welcome to live with us? This is really upsetting for me, and I would appreciate your advice.

DISTRAUGHT IN MICHIGAN

DEAR DISTRAUGHT: Whether to get vaccinated is a personal choice. You have made yours, and she has made hers. Quit being “diplomatic,” and don’t debate this with her. TELL her the terms under which she is welcome to move in. If she cannot meet those terms, she

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

will have to make other living arrangements. PERIOD.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Is it obligatory for me to add my ex’s name to our son’s graduation announcements even though he doesn’t have to pay child support and isn’t there for our kids?

PROUD MAMA IN MISSOURI

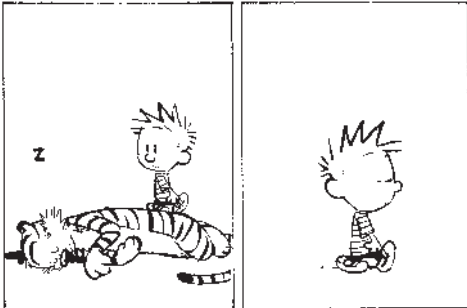
DEAR MAMA: No, it is not. Do as you wish.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

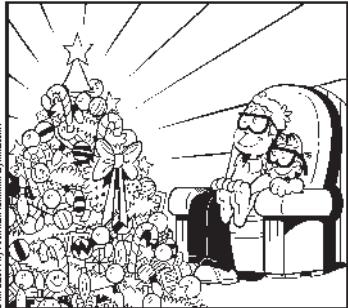
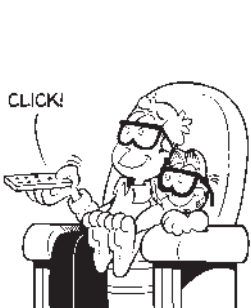


By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



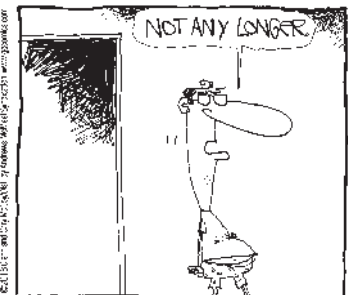
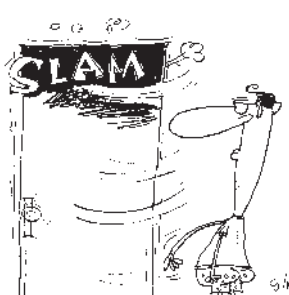
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Köln cry 4 Ball club? 7 Ms. Streisand, to fans 11 "Moby-Dick" captain 13 Vein contents 14 Verbal 15 Move, in Realtor-speak 16 Bit of advice 17 Present day? 18 Stand-in 20 Queen of Carthage 22 British ref. work 24 Camper's bag 28 Brandy glass 32 Curly-tailed pooch 33 DEA agent 34 Animal doc 36 Burden 37 "I am just — boy ..." 39 Royal address 41 Full chromosome set

43 Homer's bartender 44 Recognized 46 Noted 2001 bank-ruptcy 50 Asian desert 53 Squealer 55 Modern money 56 Mystery writer Gardner 57 A Gershwin brother 58 TV's "Warrior Princess" 59 Back muscles, for short 60 Sixth sense 61 "What was I thinking?"

DOWN 1 Seniors' org. 2 "Moon-struck" actress 3 Saintly ring 4 Droid 5 Desert-like 6 Luke-warm 7 Sniffer's need 8 Upper limb 9 Sheep's cry 10 Mercedes-Benz models 12 Gift for someone with a sweet tooth 19 Even so

21 Singer Lipa 23 "The News-room" actor Patel 25 Verizon service 26 Coup d' — 27 Lord's wife 28 Hitch 29 Scruff 30 Pressing need 31 "The One I Love" band 35 Highland hai 38 LBJ's successor 40 Average guy 42 Haunting 45 Military conflicts 47 Regretted 48 "Yes —?" 49 Comedian Trevor 50 Solidify 51 British singer Rita 52 Crunchy sandwich 54 Spigot

Solution time: 21 mins.

Last Friday's Answer

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Aguilera, 43; Katie Holmes, 45; Brad Pitt, 60; Steven Spielberg, 77.

Happy Birthday: Take your time and do things right the first time. Listen, evaluate and make every move and moment count. Let your enthusiasm lead the way, but your discipline and insight must take precedence. Stick to the facts and use common sense to navigate your way forward. You have plenty to gain if you are precise and dedicated to finishing what you start. Question anything and anyone lacking facts to back up offers or information. Your numbers are 5, 17, 20, 26, 32, 37, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Address money matters swiftly. Don't take a risk or trust someone's discretion. Say little and do a lot. Your actions will be what saves the day, not your words. A change of heart is likely due to someone's response or lack of having your back. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Opportunity awaits; displaying what you offer will change the dynamics of your position and prospects. Reveal your thoughts and intentions, and put your plans into motion. Your drive and determination will help you cover a lot of territory. Romance is on the rise. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stand still and be observant. Knowing what everyone else is thinking or doing will help you make better decisions when the time is right. Keep your money and possessions safe and your thoughts to yourself. Offer physical help instead of donating. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Be true to yourself and set a course that encourages exploration into something exciting. Feeling passionate about what you do or the people you align with will give you the courage to fulfill your dreams. A romantic gesture will pay off. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Challenge yourself, and you will surpass your expectations. Turn on the charm, network and attend events that can open doors to new beginnings. Don't let the changes or decisions others make cause confusion or lead to costs you can't afford. Physical events are favored. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't trust what you hear. Verify information before passing it along. A change of scenery will give you a different perspective on a confusing situation. Talk openly with someone with experience and wisdom. Romance is on the rise. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Plan your actions. Scurrying about without a clear picture of your goal will waste valuable time. Trust your instincts and focus on the prize. Rethink how you make and spend your cash and who you trust. Financial gain and gifts are apparent. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Unveil your skills and attributes. Be bold, and the opportunities that develop will stabilize your domestic life and meaningful relationships. Size up what's important to you and put a plan in place that makes the transition from one year to the next exciting and doable. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take care of matters before they escalate. Refrain from letting anger set in. Pour your energy into something worthwhile like self-improvement, physical fitness or upping your game by adding to your skill set. Focus and say no to pressure tactics and emotional manipulation. **

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Compassion and understanding will help you gain support and point you in a direction that benefits you beyond your imagination. Delve into the possibilities, and don't fear change. Discuss prospects with someone you love. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Pay attention to what others do and say, and you'll avoid letting someone coax you into believing something pretentious. Protect your reputation, health and meaningful relationships. Put your energy into taking care of unfinished business and furthering your position. Concentrate on what benefits you. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Slow down and allow yourself to let what you encounter sink in before you act. Refuse to let your emotions take over when secrecy and planning are your best bets. Take control instead of being controlled. ***

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

9 3 2 5 6 4 1

5 4 3 9 2

4 2 6

9 7 3 1

7 1 4

8 1 5

3 7 5 6 2 9

6 3 8

4 7 3 6

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

8 5 6 2 9 3 4 1 7

1 3 9 4 5 7 2 8 6

2 7 4 6 1 8 5 9 3

7 9 5 1 2 4 6 3 8

4 2 1 3 8 6 7 5 9

6 8 3 9 7 5 1 2 4

5 6 7 8 3 1 9 4 2

9 4 8 5 6 2 3 7 1

3 1 2 7 4 9 8 6 5

Difficulty: ★ 12/18 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GRECIAN STYLE SANDALS Solution: 7 letters

T I N S E L I N I R O T N A S

H A I R E M M U S P R I N T R

R N S S C S S E M R E H E E T

E K L S D S H I N E E P T D N

A L A S E U E E M E S T C I E

D E N T R L T E L Y I R O A I

H P D I Y H S S R L I B O R C

S L Y T S H A E R G S S I B L N

I A S C T N D N S E A B R A A

L T O H A I I C D N L O F R N

L F H M O R R I L M A N U E T

E O O R T O L A C E A E L F I

B R B S S S N G I S E D C O Q

M M O S S O L B U C K L E O U

E N O T S E L B B O C R E T E

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Last Friday's Answer: Shredded

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-5480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Bucks send Pistons to 23rd consecutive loss with 146-114 victory



MILWAUKEE (AP)—Damian Lillard scored 33 points, Bobby Portis had a season-high 31 and the Milwaukee Bucks trounced Detroit 146-114 on Saturday to hand the Pistons their 23rd consecutive loss.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points, eight rebounds and six assists while shooting 7 of 9 in his first game since scoring a franchise-record 64 points Wednesday night against Indiana.

Detroit matched the NBA's third-longest skid in on season. The 1995-96 Vancouver Grizzlies, 1997-98 Denver Nuggets and 2011-12 Charlotte Bobcats also lost 23 straight.

The longest losing streak within a single season is shared by the 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and 2013-14 Philadelphia 76ers, who both dropped 26 consecutive games. The 76ers also had a 28-game losing streak that started in the 2014-15 season and carried over to 2015-16.

Cade Cunningham scored 25 points for Detroit.

KINGS 125, JAZZ 104

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Keegan Murray made 12 3-pointers, two shy of the NBA record, and scored a career-high 47 points to lead Sacramento past Utah.

Murray scored a franchise-record 26 points in the third quarter and had Klay Thompson's NBA record of 14 3-pointers in his sights after making 12 of his first 13 attempts. But the second-year forward missed his final two attempts from behind the arc while becoming the sev-



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo shoots past Detroit Pistons' Kevin Knox II during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, in Milwaukee.

enth different player to make 12 or more 3s in a game.

Domantas Sabonis added 20 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. The Kings shot 22 of 45 from the 3-point line, the third time this season Sacramento made at least 20.

Colin Sexton scored 28 points for Utah.

THUNDER 118, NUGGETS 117

DENVER (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander hit a turnaround jumper with a second left and Oklahoma City rallied to beat Denver.

Jalen Williams scored 25 points and rookie Chet Holmgren had 17 points, 11 rebounds and a career-best nine blocks for the Thunder. His previous high in blocks was seven,

which came against Cleveland in his second NBA game.

Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 12 assists for Denver. Denver had its three-game winning streak snapped and lost for just the second time in 12 home games.

MAVERICKS 131, TRAIL BLAZERS 120

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Luka Doncic had a triple-double with 40 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists to help Dallas beat Portland.

Doncic scored 30 points in the first half and wrapped up the triple-double in the third quarter. He has five triple-doubles this season and 61 in his career.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 25 points for Dallas, and Dante Exum and Derrick

Jones Jr. each had 18.

Anfernee Simons had 31 points, eight rebounds and six assists for Portland. Jerami Grant scored 27 points in his first game back after missing the previous four games because of a concussion.

HEAT 118, BULLS 116

MIAMI (AP)—Jimmy Butler hit a step-back jumper as time expired to lift Miami past Chicago.

Butler came up the left side of the floor, then went to the right, headed toward the lane and coolly hit the step-back over Coby White.

Butler had 28 points to help Miami split of a two-game home series with Chicago. Kevin Love added 22 and Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 18.

DeMar DeRozan led Chicago with 27 points.

CLIPPERS 144, KNICKS 122

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 36 points, Paul George added 25 and Los Angeles routed New York for its NBA-best seventh straight victory.

The Clippers used a 42-point second quarter to lead 77-66 at the break.

George was back in the lineup after missing a game because of a sore hip. He overcame a slow start in the first half when he had six points.

New York's Jalen Brunson followed up his career-high, 50-point effort in Phoenix on Friday night with 22 points. Julius Randle also had 22.

76ERS 135, HORNETS 82

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Joel Embiid had 42 points and 15 rebounds and Philadelphia handed injury-depleted Charlotte its worst loss in franchise history.

Tyrese Maxey added 21 points for the 76ers, who shot out quickly when Embiid outscored the Hornets by himself in the first quarter and built a 29-point halftime lead.

Brandon Miller led Charlotte with 14 points. The Hornets' previous largest loss was by 50 points to Milwaukee on Jan. 10, 2000.

TIMBERWOLVES 127, PACERS 109

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Karl-Anthony Towns scored a season-high 40 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, Anthony Edwards had 37 points and Minnesota routed Indiana.

Naz Reid added 17 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves are 11-1 at home and tied with Boston for the NBA's best record at 19-5.

Minnesota shot a season-high 55.8% from the field, including a season-best 60% (18 for 30) from 3-point range. Bruce Brown and Aaron Nesmith each scored 17 points for the Pacers.

WARRIORS 124, NETS 120

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 12 straight fourth-quarter points on the way to 37, Klay Thompson added 24 points with back-to-back timely 3-pointers in the closing minutes, and Golden State beat Brooklyn to snap a three-game losing streak.

Cam Thomas scored 41 points on 15-for-24 shooting with five 3-pointers for New Jersey. The Nets lost for the third time in four games during their five-game trip.

Golden State played its first home game and second overall since Draymond Green received an indefinite suspension from the NBA to work on his behavior after he hit Phoenix center Jusuf Nurkic in the face.

CAVALIERS 127, HAWKS 119

CLEVELAND (AP)—Jarrett Allen had 25 points and 14 rebounds, Donovan Mitchell added 22 points and a career-high 13 assists and Cleveland beat Atlanta.

The Cavaliers built a 23-point lead in the first half of their first game since announcing that starting power forward Evan Mobley and former All-Star point guard Darius Garland will likely be out until February. Cleveland snapped a three-game losing streak.

Trae Young had 35 points and 10 assists for Atlanta, and Dejounte Murray scored 21 points. The Hawks have dropped six of seven.

For some NBA players, an early season injury can doom postseason award chances

MIAMI (AP)—Tyler Herro's season was off to a great start. He was averaging career-bests of 22.9 points, 4.6 assists and 1.4 steals per game for the Miami Heat, shooting the 3-pointer better than ever before and looking very much like one of the league's top players.

And then he landed on Jaren Jackson Jr.'s foot in Memphis, badly turning his ankle.

Herro's season didn't end on that play. His candidacy for postseason NBA awards did.

The NBA added and tweaked some policies this season with hopes of getting players to appear in more games and take fewer nights off to rest. Part of the enticement to play more was adding a rule where players, in most cases, need to be in 65 games so they can be eligible for postseason award voting. The league's stance is clear: if you can play, you better be playing.

But should someone miss a few weeks with a legitimate injury, they're also out of the awards mix. Herro said he isn't ready to play yet, meaning Saturday's Chicago at Miami game

will be the 18th that he misses this season—and that will officially mean he's going to fall short of that 65-game minimum.

"I don't know what the right thing to do is," Chicago coach Billy Donovan said. "I see both sides of it. But the other thing is if you have a guy that's been healthy and plays 70, 75, 80 games, those guys should also be rewarded for having the durability to endure a season that long."

Herro was one of the players who spoke out in support of the league's push to have players appear more often this season. His stance hasn't changed, even though his ankle injury has doomed his award hopes.

"I'm OK with it," Herro said this week.

The 65-game rule (it can be less in limited cases) is part of the new collective bargaining agreement that went into effect this summer and determines whether players are eligible for things such as the MVP award, an All-NBA Team, Defensive Player of the Year, an All-Defensive Team, or Most Improved Player. The league also

approved the terms of the player participation policy in September, that focusing primarily on star players—someone who has been an All-Star or on the All-NBA team in any of the prior three seasons.

The league just didn't like the look of star players resting, especially in nationally televised games.

"It's not just coming from the league office. I think whether it's our teams, our Players Association, individual players, I think there's an acknowledgment across the league that we need to return to that principle, that this is an 82-game league," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in September. "That, of course, doesn't mean that we're turning the clock back, that players are expected to play through injuries or that players, frankly, never need rest."

"But I think there's a statement of a principle that, if you're a healthy player in this league, that the expectation is that you're going to play."

It's not just Herro who's in the club of seeing award hopes dashed by early season injury.

Portland's Anfernee Simons is averaging 24.6 points, but he missed 18 games because of a torn thumb ligament—so he, too, is already assured of not playing in 65 games.

Among the big names who already have missed significant time and can't miss much more: Phoenix's Devin Booker (28.1 ppg, has missed nine games), Charlotte's LaMelo Ball (24.7 ppg, will miss eighth game Friday) and Terry Rozier (23.9 ppg, nine games missed), Utah's Lauri Markkanen (23.7 ppg, nine games missed), Brooklyn's Cam Thomas (23.4 ppg, nine games missed), Dallas' Kyrie Irving (23 ppg, seven games missed), Miami's defensive player of the year hopeful Bam Adebayo (22.3 ppg, nine games missed), New Orleans' CJ McCollum (20 ppg, 13 games missed) and Denver's Jamal Murray (18.3 ppg, 14 games missed).

"It's unfortunate that that's the way it is," Miami guard Duncan Robinson said. "But I do understand it to an extent. There has to be a line somewhere."

Charlotte coach Steve Clif-

ford remembers his days as a New York Knicks assistant when the team had what it called a durability chart: players would get a point for a game, point for a practice, point for a shoot-around. If any were missed, the total went back to zero.

"Those guys would be upset if they missed something," Clifford said. "People, they pay a lot of money. Some people only get to come to one or two games a year. They pick the games in the summer. Listen, without the players, coaches wouldn't have these great lives. Without the fans, none of us would. I think it's more than fair, in my opinion, for all of us to expect guys to get out there and play—unless they're injured."

Herro is hoping to be back in the Heat lineup in the next few days. He didn't know at the time he got hurt that it would cost him this many games, and he was hopeful of being in the award mix this season.

He's already made his peace with the reality.

"Next year then," Herro said. "Or the year after that."

Browning continues hot streak, rallies Bengals to win over Vikings in OT



CINCINNATI (AP)—

Trailing 17-3 late in the third quarter behind an offense

that had struggled to move the ball, the Bengals needed Jake Browning to be nearly perfect—and he was.

Browning led Cincinnati to three fourth-quarter touchdowns and directed the winning drive in overtime in his latest extraordinary performance since taking over for the injured Joe Burrow, and the Bengals beat the Minnesota Vikings 27-24 on Saturday to improve their position in the playoff race.

Browning won his third straight start and improved to 3-1 since Burrow suffered a season-ending right wrist injury in a loss at Baltimore. This time, he threw for 184 yards and two touchdowns in the fourth quarter and overtime, becoming the fourth QB in the past two years to throw for at least that many yards and two or more scores after three quarters.

“I feel like I need a beer,” said Browning, who beat a team that cut him from its practice squad two years ago.

Tee Higgins went high over a Vikings defender to catch a 16-yard pass from Browning and make a twisting move at the goal line for the tying touchdown with 39 seconds left in regulation.

Then, in overtime, a scrambling Browning found Tyler Boyd for a 44-yard completion that got Cincinnati (8-6) into Vikings territory and set up Evan McPherson’s game-ending 29-yard field goal.

“Jake’s just so steady, you know?” Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. “He really is. He doesn’t get rattled by a negative play. He doesn’t overreact to it.”

Browning was 29 for 42 for 324 yards with two touchdowns



Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Jake Browning (6) throws a pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Minnesota Vikings, Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, in Cincinnati.

—both to Higgins—and an interception. He completed passes to 11 receivers and has a 110.9 passer rating in his four starts.

Nick Mullens, the fourth quarterback to start a game this season for the Vikings, was solid in defeat. He passed for 303 yards with two TDs but threw two interceptions.

“An absolute grind of a football game,” Mullens said. “But those are the types of games you want to be in.”

Minnesota (7-7) has lost three of four, the only win in that stretch a 3-0 decision at Las Vegas that led to Joshua Dobbs being benched in favor of Mullens, who had more success finding the Vikings’ playmakers.

Jordan Addison had six catches for 111 yards and two TDs. Justin Jefferson had seven receptions for 84 yards in

his first full game since returning from a hamstring injury. He suffered a chest injury in the Raiders game.

“Nick did a fantastic job today,” Jefferson said. “Especially with just a week of preparation of him being the starting quarterback. I feel like he came out today with confidence.”

Backup Ty Chandler had a career-high 132 rushing yards and a touchdown for Minnesota. Chandler got the start in place of Alexander Mattison, who has a sprained ankle.

With five teams a half-game behind them in the NFC standings, the Vikings could be out of playoff position by the end of the weekend.

“Very unfortunate,” Minnesota coach Kevin O’Connell said. “Come on the road and battle a team that’s playing

well right now. Felt like we let one slip away.”

The Vikings let Browning go from their practice squad in 2021. The Bengals picked him up for their practice squad, and he won the job as Burrow’s backup before this season.

“I think right after we made the field goal and won the game, I screamed at camera and said, ‘They never should have cut me,’” Browning said.

Browning took over the game late in the third quarter, throwing seven straight completions during a 75-yard drive for the Bengals’ first touchdown, a 13-yard strike to Higgins.

On the Bengals’ next possession, Browning hit Ja’Marr Chase for 24 yards to convert a third-and-21. Joe Mixon’s 1-yard TD run on fourth-and-goal tied the game at 17-all.

Browns coach Kevin Stefanski had no issues with the dominant Garrett speaking his mind.

“We’re not the thought police,” he said. “Our guys can voice their opinions. ‘I remind the officials of it every game. Just so they’re aware that teams are going to be doing everything in their power to slow down (No.) 95. That’s what they’re talking about in their building.”

“So when he’s being clearly restricted, we expect it to be called.”

The Browns (8-5), who are trying make the playoffs for just the second time since 2002, host the Chicago Bears (5-8) on Sunday. The last time the teams played in 2021, Garrett recorded a career-high 4 1/2 sacks and the Browns sacked quarterback Justin Fields nine times in a 26-6 win.

Browns star Myles Garrett fined \$25K by NFL for criticizing officials after game, source says

CLEVELAND (AP)—Cleveland Browns star defensive end Myles Garrett was fined \$25,000 by the NFL for “public criticism of officiating” after he made pointed remarks following last week’s game against Jacksonville, a person familiar with the punishment told The Associated Press.

Garrett was informed of the fine Saturday, said the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the league has not made this week’s player fines public.

Angered by the Jags not being penalized for holding him, Garrett called the officiating a travesty following Cleveland’s 31-27 win and said it’s time for the officials to be held

to a higher standard.

“Someone has to hold them accountable for the plays or the calls they don’t make,” he said. “And they need to be under the same kind of microscope as we are every single play.”

Garrett’s frustration had been building at what he feels is a lack of penalties being called against offensive linemen while blocking him. He’s been stuck on 13 sacks for three weeks and believes the officials haven’t been treating him fairly.

“It had been something that had been stoked for the last couple weeks, and then other rushers have been also dealing with the same thing,” Garrett said following practice Friday.

“I can only speak for myself, but once you’ve got a whole position kind of fed up of how they’re being treated, then you know something’s kind of off.”

Pittsburgh’s T.J. Watt, another of the league’s elite pass rushers, recently made similar comments to Garrett’s.

On Friday, Garrett said he didn’t regret his outburst.

“Absolutely not,” he said, adding he doesn’t fear any backlash.

“Right now I’m not getting any calls, so it can’t get much worse than that,” the four-time Pro Bowler said. “But I hope it has a positive effect. I’m not trying to offend anybody. I just want them to do their job to the best of their ability.”

weekend. The simplest scenario would be a loss or tie by Seattle to Philadelphia on Monday night.

The Broncos’ hopes of making the playoffs for the first time since the 2015 season took a hit. Denver (7-7) had won six of its previous seven games to pull within a game of AFC West-leading Kansas City.

Goff threw touchdown passes in the second quarter to LaPorta, rookie running back Jahmyr Gibbs and Amon-Ra St. Brown to give Detroit a 21-0 halftime lead. Denver had just 75 yards in the first half.

Goff was 24 of 34 for 278 yards and didn’t have a turnover. He joined Houston’s C.J. Stroud as the only QBs to throw for five TDs in a game this season.

COLTS 30, STEELERS 13

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Gardner Minshew threw three touchdown passes and Indianapolis improved its playoff prospects, beating sagging Pittsburgh.

Minshew was 18 of 28 for 215 yards and matched his career high for TD passes while leading a Colts offense lacking its usual complement of playmakers. Leading receiver Michael Pittman Jr. and top rusher Zack Moss left the game with injuries. The Colts finished with 170 yards rushing.

The Colts (8-6) have won five of six and hold the AFC’s final playoff spot. The Steelers (7-7) dropped their third straight and fell into last place in the AFC North.

Pittsburgh took an early 13-0 lead behind backup quarterback Mitch Trubisky, but by late in the fourth quarter, the Colts had scored 30 consecutive points and third-stringer Mason Rudolph was slinging passes for the Steelers.

Pittsburgh only had 74 yards rushing and finished with 216 total yards.

LIONS 42, BRONCOS 17

DETROIT (AP)—Jared Goff matched a career high with five touchdown passes, three to rookie tight end Sam LaPorta, and Detroit routed Denver.

The NFC North-leading Lions (10-4) could clinch a spot in the postseason for the first time since the 2016 season if other results go their way this

Ex-NFL player Adam ‘Pacman’ Jones reaches plea deal over airport incident

BURLINGTON, Ky. (AP)—Former NFL player Adam “Pacman” Jones reached a plea agreement on a disorderly conduct charge Thursday after he was removed from a plane before takeoff at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport in September.

Jones, who played most of his career as a defensive back for the Cincinnati Bengals, was sentenced to 30 days in jail as part of the deal but that time is suspended as long as he has no unlawful conduct at the airport for two years, according to media reports.

Jones was charged in Sep-

tember on misdemeanor counts of alcohol intoxication, disorderly conduct and terroristic threatening. Police were called to the airport at 6 a.m. after crew members complained of an unruly passenger on a departing flight.

Jones told WKRC-TV that he asked to be moved to another seat because a phone charger wasn’t working. He denied being intoxicated.

Jones played 12 seasons in the NFL, first with the Tennessee Titans, Dallas Cowboys and Bengals. He was suspended for the entire 2007 season for a series of police-related incidents.

Dodgers, Ohtani got creative with \$700M deal, but both sides still have some risk



PHOENIX

(AP)—Once the initial shock wore off on the price tag of Shohei Ohtani's record-shattering \$700 million, 10-year deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers, details about the contract emerged that were nearly as stunning.

A total of \$680 million—97% of the money—was deferred until 2034-43 with no interest.

Had the Dodgers invented some kind of contract voodoo new to Major League Baseball?

Not really. But it appears to be a team-friendly deal that also has benefits for Ohtani as



Los Angeles Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani, center, poses for a photo with owner and chairman Mark Walter, left, and president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman applaud during a news conference at Dodger Stadium Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, in Los Angeles.

the Japanese superstar departs the Angels, heads 30 miles up Interstate 5 and establishes a new home with the Dodgers in Chavez Ravine.

"Thanks to his endorsements and other off-the-field revenue streams, he has the luxury to defer compensation," said Michael Rueda, head of the U.S. division of sports and entertainment at Withers law firm. "But there's always some risk."

Part of Rueda's job is giving financial advice to high-profile sports stars and celebrities. He said the Ohtani-Dodgers deal looks like a solid arrangement, even if there are tradeoffs for both sides.

Make no mistake, the 29-year-old Ohtani is a rich man and will be rich long into the foreseeable future, but money promised later is never the same as money in hand.

One example of Ohtani's risk: Former Pittsburgh Penguins superstar Mario Lemieux was out about \$26 million in the 1990s when the franchise was in financial trouble and couldn't pay the money it owed the hockey leg-

end in a deferred deal.

Things eventually worked out. Lemieux converted his deferred salary into equity with the team, then partnered with Ron Burkle to pull the club out of bankruptcy. They eventually made a windfall after selling part of their stake in 2021—but it's a reminder that financial circumstances can change when 20 years pass. The Dodgers were certainly a fan-drawing juggernaut in 2023, but 2043 doesn't come for a long time. LA, after all, is only 12 years removed from filing for bankruptcy protection itself under former owner Frank McCourt.

There's also at least some risk for the franchise: The New York Mets famously deferred \$5.9 million that slugger Bobby Bonilla was owed in 2000 and—thanks to an 8% interest rate—will end up paying nearly \$30 million total in annual installments until 2035. The Mets have leaned into the self-own in recent seasons, with owner Steve Cohen celebrating the July 1 payment that Bonilla is due each year.

CAMACHO

From page 20

almost fell once in a fit of exhaustion, but regained composure and kept the fight going.

By the third and final round, both fighters were exhausted and it was evident with their much slower exchanges, but they still gave it their all until the final second.

Camacho came pounding back with more fervor to try to secure the win and the hometown advantage stoked his fire as the crowd cheered him in unison to his unanswered assail on Albert that sealed Camacho's win.

The 24-year-old Camacho was emotional after the fight and dropped to his knees as the "Norfolk" soundtrack by Travis Kalina played over the speakers announcing that he had won and the crowd exploded into cheers.

Camacho said he felt multiple emotions as he first entered the ring to the soundtrack and that it was like a welcoming home party after being away from home for two and a half years.

The U.S. Marine said of his fight that, "it was simple, basic, trust my training, and win. I gotta beat my opponent. I went

in there with a 'kill mindset,' but also with a reality state of mind, where I was like, 'I just gotta beat him.' So just simple, basic, but also in a special way."

He said of Albert that was a "tough guy. He did not want to go down. He had an islander chin. He's not a very big guy so that kind of boosted my confidence. I felt like I could've knocked him out—but, this guy surprised me. I trained super hard for this fight to knock him out, but this man didn't want to go down."

He dedicated his win to the people of Saipan, people who came out to support the "young and up-and-coming fighters," and to his training partners, "because without them, this wouldn't be possible."

Camacho thanked everyone for coming out to watch and support and, "I want to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday. Thank you to all my fans, and my team YoungBoys Inc., and coach Cuki [Alvarez] for inviting more over to Trench [Tech]."

Camacho trained along with his brother, Jose with Trench Tech, under coach Justis "Cuki" Alvarez before his fight, but also trained in Hawaii with YoungBoys Inc. under his

coach, Nainoa Dung, professional MMA fighter who used to fight in Bellator MMA. He then said he was proud of his brother for the training and ef-

fort he put into his own match, which he won also won.

Results of the other fights will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.



LEIGH GASES

Guam's Jake Albert swerves to dodge Trench Tech's Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho's jab during their main event boxing match in the "Ring of Fire" early yesterday morning at the Garapan Central Park Roundhouse.



LEIGH GASES

Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho goes for a body shot to Guam's Jake Albert on the corner during their boxing main event fight in the "Ring of Fire" early morning yesterday at the Garapan Central Park Roundhouse.

SSHS

From page 20

They will execute."

As for the defending champion MHS team, Mercado said that Destiny Pangelinan, the team's captain, is "a very amazing player. I'm always a fan. She's awesome. But, if you have a game plan, then you stick to it, anything's possible in basketball."

Mercado thanked the Prospects team because they scrimmaged with them, SSHS, MHS, Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation, and the Interscholastic Sports Program. "Since I'm not with PSS anymore, I hope this is not my last gig and I hope they give me an opportunity to defend this title," he said. He then added, "I'm a champion

because I'm a Manta Ray."

The team's seniors who were blessed with a championship before they graduate were team captain Yasmeen Younis, Casey Cruz, Angel Calage, and Lency Sagarino.

Younis led her team to the first championship that she said she's been wanting to get since her freshman year, but MHS won it the past four years in a row.

Now that they've won it, Younis said, "It feels so good knowing that I helped teach all these new girls and that we built a really strong bond together and that we were able to take it home."

As for losing the first game of the championship round when she injured herself, she said, "There [were] a lot of negative thoughts but my

coach, Mr. Mercado really helped me get through it and pushed me through—taught that it's mind over matter and helped my team win."

She said despite spraining her ankle in the first game, she pushed through as she was the team captain and showed up for

her team in the deciding game and helped lead them to victory.

SSHS 28 – Younis 12, Saralu 10, Ramon 4.

MHS 27 – Pangelinan 16, Dela Rosa 7, Lin 3, George 1.

Scoring by halves: 12-4, 28-27.



LEIGH GASES

Saipan Southern High School girls high basketball team takes a selfie with their coach Mike Mercado, second from left, after their championship match against Marianas High School last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

GUAM

From page 20

siang, Maria Castro, Davian Atalig, Marley Castro, Dakota Matagolai, Richelle Tsunami Ramon, Kailani Laniyo, Ti'ana Villanueva, Maria Fathangin, and Vivalyn Yangirelit.

The MRC Blue JV team was made up of Jeffrey Quitugua, Hayden Igisomar, Masan Igisomar, Luis Claridades, Walder Simram, Stanley Choway, Caleb Yug, Albrent Lucido, Taiyo Desebel, Neo Skerei, Carlos Chutin, Daniel Taisakan, Jesse Olopai, and R.J. Mendiola.

The MRC Red varsity team consisted of Trey Aiken, Oscar Setefano, Koji Taisakan, Jason Limes, Frankie Basa Jr., Brad Fritz, Cain Castro, Irvin 'Stallion' Olopai, Matt Reyes, Mamerto Forbes, and Darien Quitugua.

GRC included Justin Tanguileg, Joe Mateo, Jerome Uson, Rebwato Choban, Christopher Leon Guerrero, Zayven Piolo, Jayven Mendiola, Josiah Mendiola, Jude Mendiola, Antonio Victor, Jaython Leon Guerrero, Ryan Paulus, Amiotonu San Nicholas, Donavan Degracia, Chris Toro, and Troy Fritz.

The Guam women's team was made up of Jenesis Vita, Jai-cia Cabrera, Cadance Mansapit, Tiarah Muña, Elexis Gogue, Tori Starr, Victoria Botelho, Katrina Penlaflor, Sherald Mae Alvarez, Jaena Leon Guerrero, Caeley Leon Guerrero, Alexandria Cruz, and Rosita Kuper.

MRC board member Koji Taisakan said, "Rugby from the outside perspective seems like a really tough and rough sport, but I have yet to play another

sport that has this type of camaraderie. Yes, we're tough on the field, but we encourage each other if we miss a hit [and] if we make a mistake."

He said that Rugby 7s is a "fast-paced sport" and there is no time to sit and mope on mistakes as there are just seven minutes in two halves.

Taisakan said, "We're looking forward to playing in Guam next year for the annual tournament that Guam Rugby Club hosts—Tru GRIT (Guam Rugby International Tournament). [The] last time the MRC went down to Guam for the Tru GRIT in 2019, we placed in the Top 5 out of 14 teams. So, we've come a long way from where we were four years ago."

Taisakan added that it was a great turnout and appreciates all the supporters. "We're greatly honored to have them all come out and bless us with their presence. A huge thanks to our club president, Mr. Sean Ficke, for coming in and [making] this tournament become a reality... To our food and catering, and especially to our chefs, chef D.J. and Blu Taitano."

Setefano said during the tourney that MRC was a group of just 10 people, but now there's about 60 players. "I want to encourage more young people to come out—especially girls," he said.

MRC then thanked their following sponsors Monster Pizza, MARPAC, Shirley's Catering, D&Q, Saipan Ice and Water Co., Pacific Rim, Hertz, UR Tents, Latte Built Gym, Triple J, Takumi Restaurant, and the Northern Marianas Sports Association.



Bucks send Pistons to 23rd consecutive loss with 146-114 victory.

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

Dodgers, Ohtani got creative with \$700M deal, but both sides still have some risk.

PAGE 19



20 MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SSHS edges MHS by 1 in girls hoops finals

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays has a flair for the dramatic as they upset reigning champs Marianas High School Lady Dolphins by just a point, 28-27, in a thrilling double-elimination finals of the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday morning at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Lady Manta Rays grasped at the upper hand in the winners' bracket after they tore down the only regular season undefeated team in the semis of the championship round by defeating the Lady Dolphins by also just a point, 31-30.

In the morning, MHS actually first came bounding down the court to victory in the first

game, 27-21, and forced the deciding game in the afternoon. But, after a 30-minute break, SSHS gathered their wits and executed a gameplan that led to their first championship and broke the four-year championship streak of the Lady Dolphins.

MHS, led by Destiny Pangelinan, put up a back-and-



LEIGH GASES

Champion team Saipan Southern High School poses with runner-up Marianas High School after their championship game in the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday morning at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Guam Rugby Club wins 1st Marianas Rugby Cup

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Guam Rugby Club bested teams from the Marianas Rugby Club in the one-day Marianas Rugby Cup tournament at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Braving the scorching sun, the rugby 7s players of all ages and sizes took to the field as spectators cheered them on from the stands from 10am to around 2pm in an action-packed Saturday.

The well-established GRC etched their name first in the

perpetual cup after blowing the recently developed MRC teams out of the water in all of their matchups.

In the men's division, GRC won two matches over MRC JV, 45-0 and 17-7; and two matches against MRC varsity, 26-5 and 28-26. In the women's division, GRC slipped past MRC, 24-20; edged MRC, 26-14; and flew by, 33-0 in the last matchup.

The MRC women's team included captain Tatiana Mettao Pangelinan, Yuriko Kawakami Castro, Aiko Ra-

See GUAM on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

A Marianas Rugby Club player gets tackled by a Guam Rugby Club player during their Marianas Rugby Cup match last Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

forth struggle in the second half despite trailing big time in the first. SSHS' lead was cut down to just one point as each time they scored, MHS would answer and a tug of war with the points ensued until the final seconds.

However, just like their semis match, the Lady Mantas held on to their 1-point lead with their well-played defense and pressure that caused inaccurate, fast-break Hail Mary's by MHS that amounted to nothing.

SSHS coach Mike Mercado said after the finals, "I always said that girls are always smarter to coach. Everything I said, everything we practiced, they executed perfectly and I couldn't ask for anything more."

After their first game loss, Mercado told the team, "Shift your energy to positivity—I don't want to hear any negative language and that's what the girls did, they followed. Like I said, girls are smarter to coach."

See SSHS on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

Saipan Southern High School's Rosie Saralu goes for a jumper in the first game of the championship tourney of the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday morning at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Camacho beats Albert in ROF main event

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



"Guerra time" in the Marianas made a successful comeback after five years and it did not disappoint the hundreds that flocked and rocked the Garapan Central Park Roundhouse last Saturday.

The long-awaited main event bout was won by CNMI's Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho via a split decision scoring of the three rounds—30-29, 29-30, and 30-28—against Guam



LEIGH GASES

Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho raises his hand with cheers from the crowd before announcement of the winner in his boxing main event fight in the "Ring of Fire" against Guam's Jake Albert early midnight yesterday at an action-packed Garapan Central Park Roundhouse.

Muay Thai's Jake Albert.

Camacho and Albert finally entered the ring around 12:30am

as the MMA faithful burned the midnight oil along with the fighters in the Trench Warz Pro-

motions' "Ring of Fire" boxing and kickboxing event that started at 6pm and ended past 1am the next morning.

Blow by eyebrow-splitting and chin-rattling blow was met with the crowd's oohs and screams that provided the ear-shattering soundtrack to the intense exchanges in the ring.

The first round was an explosion of fury, adrenaline, and energy that left spectators on the edge of their seats and made them lose their breath as Camacho laid it on Albert for a first round that favored the Tanapag Beach Bad Boy.

The second round saw a return of heavy fire by Albert who landed multiple shots to a tiring Camacho. Camacho **See CAMACHO on Page 19**